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ABSTRACT

This special subject volume on "Authors" was especially created to appeal to young readers in a format they can enjoy reading and readily understand. Each volume contains alphabetically arranged sketches. Each entry provides at least one picture of the individual profiled, and bold-faced rubrics lead the reader to information on birth, youth, early memories, education, first jobs, marriage and family, career highlights, memorable experiences, hobbies, and honors and awards. Each of the entries ends with a list of easily accessible sources designed to lead the student to further reading on the individual and a current address; obituary entries are also included, written to provide a perspective on the individual's entire career. Authors who appear in this volume are: Andrew Clements (1949-); Eoin Colfer (1965-); Sharon Flake (1955-); Edward Gorey (Retrospective) (1925-2000); Francisco Jimenez (1943-); Astrid Lindgren (Retrospective) (1907-2002); Chris Lynch (1962-); Marilyn Nelson (1946-); Tamora Pierce (1954-); and Virginia Euwer Wolff (1937-). Contains a Cumulative Index, a Places of Birth Index, and a Birthday Index. (NKA)

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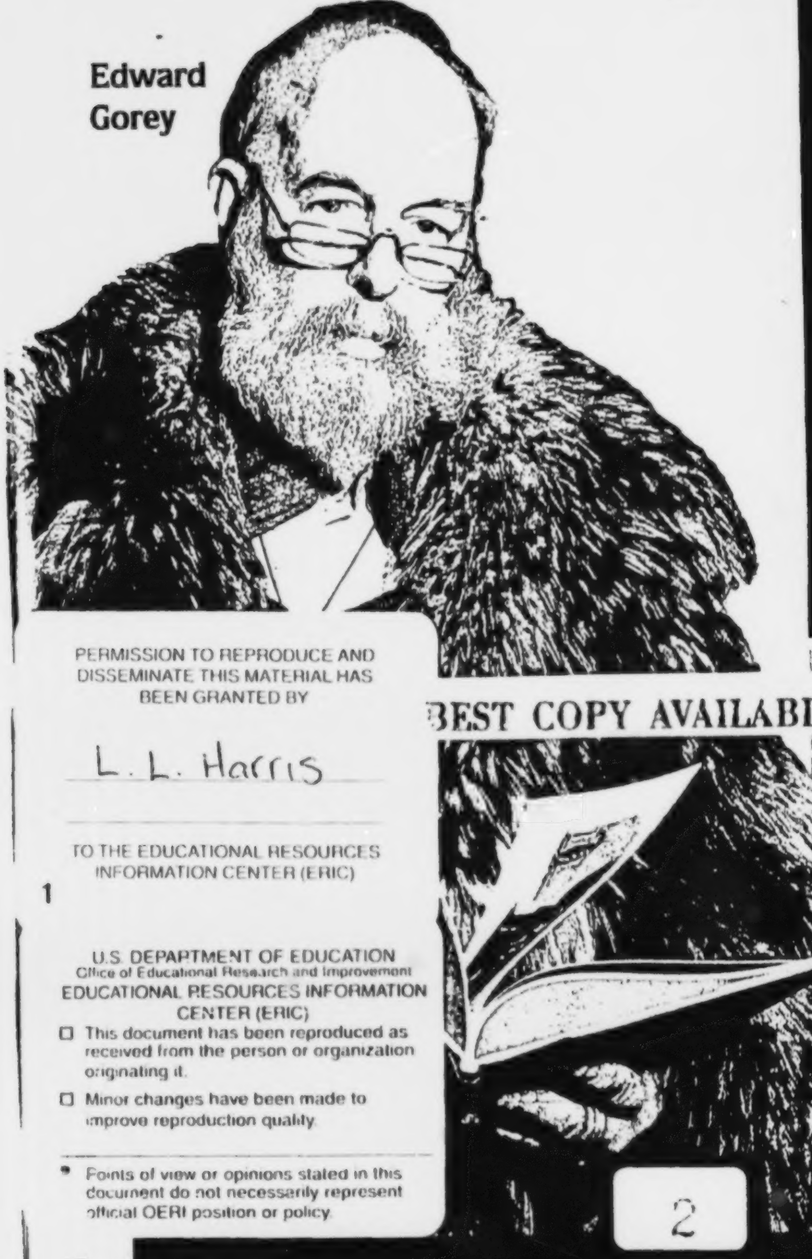
Authors

Volume 13

Biography Today

ED 476 286



Edward Gorey

Astrid Lindgren

Andrew Clements

Sharon Flake

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FEATURING . . . Andrew Clements, Eoin Colfer, Sharon Flake, Edward Gorey, Francisco Jiménez, Astrid Lindgren, Chris Lynch, Marilyn Nelson, Tamora Pierce, Virginia Euwer Wolff

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Biography Today

Profiles of People of Interest to Young Readers

Authors

Volume 13

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Preface

Welcome to the 13th volume of the **Biography Today Authors**. We are publishing this series in response to suggestions from our readers, who want more coverage of more people in *Biography Today*. Several volumes, covering **Artists, Authors, Performing Artists, Scientists and Inventors, Sports Figures, and World Leaders,** have appeared thus far in the Subject Series. Each of these hardcover volumes is 200 pages in length and covers approximately 10 individuals of interest to readers ages 9 and above. The length and format of the entries are like those found in the regular issues of *Biography Today,* but there is **no duplication** between the regular series and the special subject volumes.

The Plan of the Work

As with the regular issues of *Biography Today,* this special subject volume on **Authors** was especially created to appeal to young readers in a format they can enjoy reading and readily understand. Each volume contains alphabetically arranged sketches. Each entry provides at least one picture of the individual profiled, and bold-faced rubrics lead the reader to information on birth, youth, early memories, education, first jobs, marriage and family, career highlights, memorable experiences, hobbies, and honors and awards. Each of the entries ends with a list of easily accessible sources designed to lead the student to further reading on the individual and a current address. Obituary entries are also included, written to provide a perspective on the individual's entire career. Obituaries are clearly marked in both the table of contents and at the beginning of the entry.

Biographies are prepared by Omnigraphics editors after extensive research, utilizing the most current materials available. Those sources that are generally available to students appear in the list of further reading at the end of the sketch.

Indexes

A new index now appears in all *Biography Today* publications. In an effort to make the index easier to use, we have combined the **Name** and **General Index** into one, called the **Cumulative Index**. This new index contains the names of all individuals who have appeared in *Biography Today* since the series began. The names appear in bold faced type, followed by the issue in which they appeared. The Cumulative Index also contains the occupations, nationalities, and ethnic and minority origins of individuals profiled. The Cumulative Index is cumulative, including references to all individuals who have appeared in the *Biography Today* General Series and the *Biography Today* Special Subject volumes since the series began in 1992.

The Birthday Index and Places of Birth Index will continue to appear in all Special Subject volumes.

Our Advisors

This series was reviewed by an Advisory Board comprised of librarians, children's literature specialists, and reading instructors to ensure that the concept of this publication — to provide a readable and accessible biographical magazine for young readers — was on target. They evaluated the title as it developed, and their suggestions have proved invaluable. Any errors, however, are ours alone. We'd like to list the Advisory Board members, and to thank them for their efforts.

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Birney Middle School Library
Southfield, MI

Our Advisory Board stressed to us that we should not shy away from controversial or unconventional people in our profiles, and we have tried to follow their advice. The Advisory Board also mentioned that the sketches might be useful in reluctant reader and adult literacy programs, and we would value any comments librarians might have about the suitability of our magazine for those purposes.

Your Comments Are Welcome

Our goal is to be accurate and up-to-date, to give young readers information they can learn from and enjoy. Now we want to know what you think. Take a look at this issue of *Biography Today*, on approval. Write or call me with your comments. We want to provide an excellent source of biographical information for young people. Let us know how you think we're doing.

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Andrew Clements 1949-

American Writer of Picture Books and Novels
Author of *Frindle*

BIRTH

Andrew Clements was born on May 29, 1949, in Camden, New Jersey. His father, William Denney Clements, Jr., was an insurance salesman, and his mother, Doris (Kruse) Clements, was a homemaker. Andrew had five brothers and sisters.

YOUTH

Clements spent his boyhood in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, then moved with his family to Springfield, Illinois. As a child, he developed a love of books and reading that has lasted throughout his life. Some of his favorite books were true adventure stories and biographies. Despite his love for reading, though, he never considered becoming a writer. "I really had no ideas about being a writer," he recalled. "To be a reader was more than enough. I loved books, and my parents and teachers and school librarians kept me well supplied."

Clements remembered his first trip to the elementary school library, when he chose a thick book on myths. The next day, he asked his teacher if he could return the book to the library. When she asked sympathetically if the book was too difficult for him to read, he replied that he had already finished it and wanted a new one. "That event created for me an open invitation to head to the library just about any old time I wanted to," he noted.

> *"I really had no ideas about being a writer," Clements said about his childhood. "To be a reader was more than enough. I loved books, and my parents and teachers and school librarians kept me well supplied."*

In addition to reading, Clements enjoyed playing outdoors as a boy. His family had a summer home on a lake in Maine where he swam and explored with his siblings. Clements was also a very observant and inquisitive child. He often wondered about how things worked, or about what other people's lives must be like. Years later, this natural curiosity helped him create realistic characters in his books.

EDUCATION

Clements attended Springfield High School in Illinois. It was during his senior year that he first began to recognize his own talent as a writer. His English teacher, Mrs. Bernice Rappell, gave the class an assignment that involved writing a parody (a humorous imitation of a well-known literary work). Clements composed a parody of a heroic poem about then-President Lyndon Johnson that he called "Lynndonne and the White Knight." Mrs. Rappell thought the poem was hilarious and told him that it ought to be published. "She was the first person who'd ever suggested that my writing might be appealing to people other than my family and teachers," Clements recalled.

After graduating from high school, Clements attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Although he still didn't plan to become a writer, his college experience provided good training for his later career. "I was an English major and read great books and plays and poetry for about three years solid," he remembered. "That immersion in classic literature tuned up my ear and gave me a taste for words and language and well-crafted plots." In addition to papers for class assignments, Clements wrote some song lyrics and poems during his college years. In 1971 he earned a bachelor's degree in English from Northwestern University. The following year, in 1972, he earned a master's degree in elementary education from National-Louis University in Evanston.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Andrew Clements is the author of more than 50 books for children, ranging from picture books and early readers to middle-grade novels. Since Clements worked as a teacher for several years before he turned to writing, many of his books take place in schools and focus on the relationship between students and teachers. "Few contemporary writers portray the public school world better than Clements," wrote Patricia McCormick in the *New York Times*. "Middle-grade teachers—and, more important, middle-grade readers—love his books precisely because they reflect the emotional and cultural reality of today's children and their school life." Clements is probably best known for his first middle-grade novel, *Frindle,* which won the 1997 Christopher Award.

Becoming a Teacher and Editor

After earning his master's degree in education in 1972, Clements worked as a teacher in the Illinois public schools for seven years. He began his career by teaching fourth grade at Sunset Ridge School in Northfield for two years. Next he taught eighth grade at Wilmette Junior High in Wilmette for three years. Finally, he taught English at New Trier High School in Winnetka for two years.

Clements enjoyed interacting with students and he took particular pleasure in sharing his love of books with them. "I loved reading good books with kids," he stated. "As a teacher, it was a thrill to read a book aloud, and see a whole class listen so carefully to every word, dying to know what would happen next. And I was amazed at the wonderful discussions a good book can spark. Good books make good things happen in real life. They can make a big difference."

Years later, Clements would draw upon his classroom experiences to create some of his most popular books. "My favorite part of teaching was getting

to know all the people — kids and teachers and parents," he explained. "So many people to learn about and wonder about. I didn't know it at the time, but that classroom experience would become the foundation for my writing career, an endless supply of ideas and characters and situations, some funny, some scary, some heartbreaking, and all true and real and powerful."

In 1979, Clements left teaching and moved to New York City. He and his wife spent the next year trying to break into show business as a singing/songwriting team, but they had little success. In 1980, Clements took a job in the publishing industry. He worked as an editor at a series of publishing companies over the next dozen years, finishing up as vice president and editorial director at Picture Book Studio in Saxonville, Massachusetts.

Throughout his career in publishing, Clements was frequently asked to use his writing skills to prepare advertising copy, biographies of authors, and other business materials. When he eventually became an editor of children's books, he helped translate and adapt European picture books for the American market. In the mid-1980s, he learned that the well-known illustrator Yoshi was looking for a story to illustrate that took place underwater. Clements decided to write the story himself. "When I was given the

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chance to start writing for children, I jumped at it," he said. This early effort turned into the popular picture book *Big Al*. Published in 1987, *Big Al* tells the story of a large, scary-looking fish who tries desperately to get the smaller fish to like him. He finally succeeds when he manages to save the life of another fish.

Picture Books and Easy Readers

Clements published mostly picture books and easy readers during the early part of his writing career. "I love the compactness of the picture book form and the discipline required to write one — like pouring ten gallons of ideas into a teacup," he explained. In 1990 he published *Santa's Secret Helper,* in which Mrs. Claus helps her exhausted husband by delivering gifts around the world. In 1992 Clements wrote *Mother Earth's Counting Book,* which teaches children to count beginning with "one Earth" and moving through the four oceans and seven continents. A reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* praised the book, stating that the curiosity of children "will likely be fanned by the intelligence of Clements's . . . presentation."

In 1993 Clements quit his job in publishing in order to write full-time. As he was getting started, he concentrated on picture books and easy readers, including playful stories like *Billy and the Bad Teacher* (1992) and *Double Trouble in Walla Walla* (1997). In 2000 Clements published a series of books based on true stories about heroic pets. For example, *Dolores and the Big Fire* tells the story of a cat who woke up her owner and saved his life when a fire spread through their home. In a review for *School Library Journal,* Jessica Snow called it "a wonderful story . . . that will appeal to newly independent readers." In *Brave Norman,* a blind dog hears the calls of a drowning child at the beach and swims to her rescue. *Booklist* reviewer Gillian Engberg commented that the "gripping, sentimental story" was "perfectly paced and worded for new readers."

Frindle

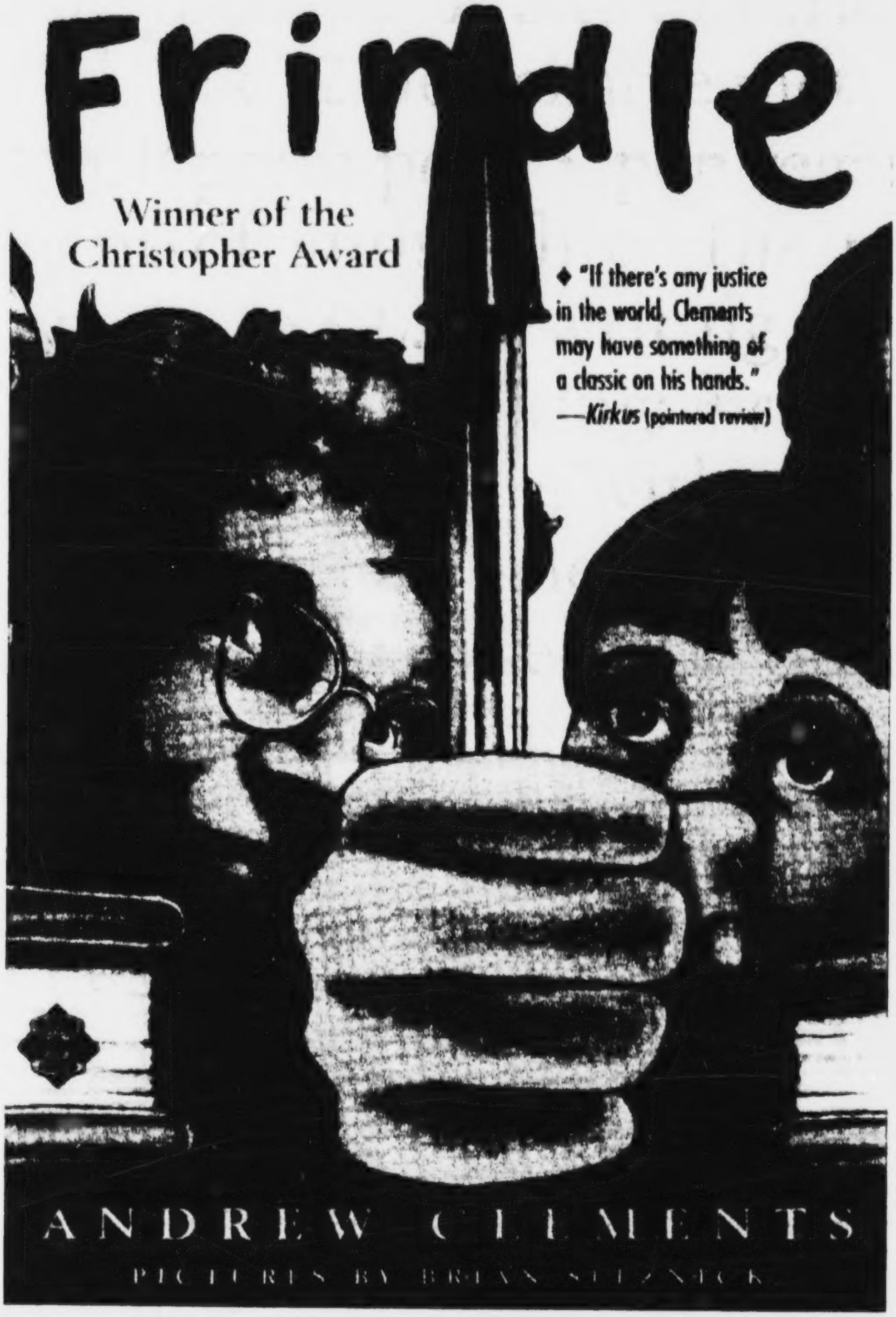
Clements published *Frindle,* his first novel for middle-grade readers, in 1996. He initially wrote the story in picture-book form, with the entire plot and all the characters compressed into a few pages of text. But this early form of the book was rejected by a number of publishers. Several editors suggested that Clements expand his story into a chapter book, and he finally agreed to try it. "As I expanded the idea, paragraphs or even sentences in the picture book text became whole chapters in the novel," he recalled. "It was a great learning process, and as I keep writing both picture books and chapter books, the learning continues."

Clements got the idea for *Frindle* as he spoke to a group of elementary school students in Rhode Island. "I was trying to explain to them how words only mean what we decide they mean," he remembered. "They didn't believe me when I pointed to a fat dictionary and told them that ordinary people like them and like me had made up all the words in that book — and that new words get made up all the time." Clements suggested that the class think of a new name for a common object — for example, they could begin calling a pen a "frindle." He explained that if their new word was used by enough people, it could eventually wind up in the dictionary. "The kids loved that story, and for a couple of years I told that same story every time I went to talk at a school or a library," Clements related. "Then one day in 1990 as I was sifting through my life, looking for a story idea, I wondered what would happen if a kid started using a new word, and other kids really liked it, but his English teacher didn't. So the idea for the book was born."

> *"Few contemporary writers portray the public school world better than Clements," wrote Patricia McCormick in the* New York Times. *"Middle-grade teachers — and, more important, middle-grade readers — love his books precisely because they reflect the emotional and cultural reality of today's children and their school life."*

Frindle centers around the character of Nick, a bright but lazy fifth-grader who always finds creative ways to avoid getting homework assignments. He finally meets his match in his tough new teacher, Mrs. Granger. As a way to annoy Mrs. Granger, Nick invents the word "frindle" and convinces other kids in his school to use it in place of the word "pen." Over time, "frindle" spreads across the city, state, and country, until ten years later it is included in the dictionary. At this point, Nick discovers that Mrs. Granger had been secretly supporting him and his new word all along.

Frindle became a popular and critical success. It was nominated for more than 30 awards and received the 1997 Christopher Award. "This funny novel, in which everybody wins, is often on suggested classroom reading lists and is the type of book that students eagerly pass along to one another," Stephanie Loer wrote in the *Boston Globe*. "The author has created a fresh, imaginative plot that will have readers smiling all the way through, if not laughing out loud," Elizabeth S. Watson added in *Horn Book*.


Frindle
Winner of the Christopher Award
◆ "If there's any justice in the world, Clements may have something of a classic on his hands."
—Kirkus (pointered review)
ANDREW CLEMENTS
PICTURES BY BRIAN SELZNICK

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Since the publication of *Frindle,* Clements has continued writing picture books and has also written several more chapter books for middle-grade readers. He says he enjoys writing for different age groups. "A picture book is a very small container," he explained. "A chapter book is a little larger container. It will give you a little more time to explain things, to expand on the characters, to deal with a more complex set of relationships. You're writing chapter books typically for an older kid, and older kids are ready to think more deeply about the expanded relationship that you have the space in a chapter book to explore. So you might say that the more complex the idea, the larger container you need to put it into."

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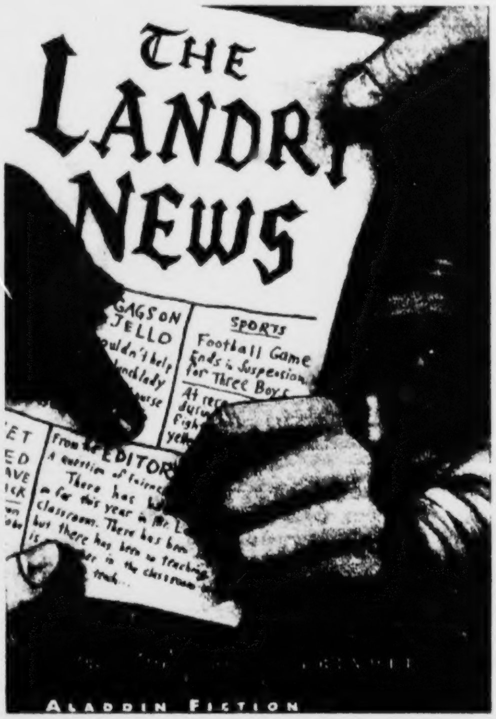
Middle-Grade Novels

Following the success of *Frindle,* Clements wrote several more novels for middle-grade readers. Most of his books are set in schools, and many of them feature fifth-grade students as the main characters. "The reason I chose fifth-graders for the stories is that to a second-, third-, and fourth-grader, a fifth-grader doesn't seem so old. And to sixth- and seventh-graders, a fifth-grader doesn't seem so young," the author noted. "So, the story and the actions of the main characters are understandable to kids on many different reading levels."

Clements published his second middle-grade novel, *The Landry News,* in 1999. This book tells the story of Cara Landry, a fifth-grader who publishes her own weekly newspaper about events at her school. Cara's troubles begin when she publishes an editorial criticizing her teacher, Mr. Larson. A one-time teacher of the year, Mr. Larson has become burned out. Every day he hands out worksheets and then sits back and reads his newspaper while the class completes them.



Cara writes that Mr. Larson's salary should be divided among the kids in the class, since they are basically expected to teach themselves. The editorial hurts Mr. Larson's feelings, but he uses Cara's words as a wake-up call and becomes more involved with the class. When the principal tries to prevent Cara from publishing an article about the effect of divorce on some of her classmates, Mr. Larson uses the incident to teach the class about freedom of the press.

Clements received positive reviews for *The Landry News.* "The depth of characterization, humor, realistic dialogue, and drama will engage readers," Shelle Rosenfeld noted in *Booklist.* "Also, the accessible examples of responsible reporting, rewards of team efforts, constitutional rights, and how the relationship between students and educators can be mutually beneficial will be educational." In a review for the *Miami Herald,* Sue Corbett added that "*The Landry News* is not only an engaging and thought-provoking read, it's a springboard to promote journalism in the classroom."

In his 2000 novel *The Janitor's Boy,* Clements tells the story of Jack, a fifth-grader who is embarrassed by the fact that his father is the janitor at his new school. When his father is called in to clean up some vomit, Jack's classmates begin to tease him. Jack responds by lashing out against his father and covering the bottom of a chair with especially smelly gum. When Jack is caught, his punishment involves helping his father after school. This experience helps him to appreciate his father's role in making the school run smoothly. "He learns that there is quite a bit to [the janitor's job]," Clements stated. "You know, the heating and the electrical work and keeping track of all the millions of things you have to keep track of to keep an old building functioning under heavy use day after day after day. He learns that his father is greatly respected by the rest of the people in the school. He learns to see past the position to the man."

Some reviewers found *The Janitor's Boy* to be a bit heavy-handed or predictable, but others pointed out that the book contained an important

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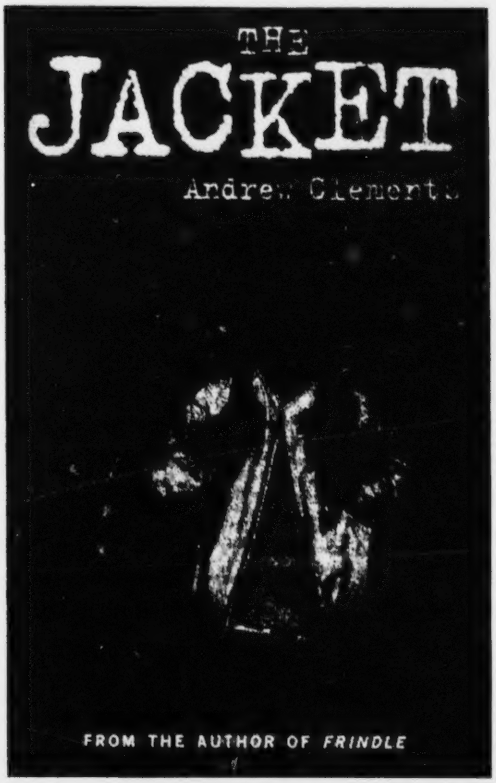

message. "Not only will young readers think twice about the workaday lives of their own parents; they'll also come away with a better appreciation for the ubiquitous [always present] but inconspicuous [rarely noticed] men and women who keep their schools humming," Patricia McCormick wrote in the *New York Times*. "All this makes it a perfect book for a classroom ethics discussion, even if it is entertaining." A reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* added that "the author's uncanny ability to capture the fragile transformation from child to adolescent and its impact on family relationships informs every aspect of the novel."

Clements was inspired to write *The Jacket*, published in 2001, by an incident from his childhood. "When my older brother was in junior high school, he accused a boy of having stolen a jacket—and it had been given to the boy's relative by my mom," he recalled. "My brother and I are from a white family and the boy was an African-American, and the whole situation was over in just a few minutes. So that was the seed of experience from which this fictional story grew. It wasn't until many years later that I stopped to think how that accusation might have made that other boy feel. Since I'm not from an African-American background, I didn't want to try to imagine the story from that boy's point of view. Instead, I focused on the white kid's thinking and drew on my own experiences of gradually waking up to the issues surrounding race in America."

In *The Jacket*, Phil sees his African-American classmate Daniel wearing a coat that looks just like one that his mother had bought him in Italy several years earlier. Phil grabs Daniel and accuses him of stealing the jacket. When the two boys are taken to the principal's office, Phil learns that Daniel's grandmother is the woman who has cleaned Phil's family home for years. It turns out that Phil's mother gave her the jacket, which Phil had outgrown. This incident forces Phil to question his feelings about African-Americans and later to recognize that his father holds racist attitudes.

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Once again, some reviewers found the novel heavy-handed while others praised its important message. "Though lacking subtlety, the story pointedly delivers a timely message and can serve as a springboard for dialogue about tolerance and self-honesty," a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer stated.

The School Story, also published in 2001, concerns 12-year-old Natalie and her best friend Zoe. Natalie lives with her mother, a children's book editor, and is struggling to come to terms with the death of her father. When Natalie writes a novel based on her experiences, her friend Zoe is determined to help her get it published. But Natalie refuses to ask her mother for help and insists on submitting the book under a pseudonym so that it will be judged on its own merits. Clements was surprised at the direction the story took once he began writing it. "I started out thinking *The School Story* was about a young author getting her work published," he noted. "But I gradually realized that the book is also about friendship and faith and determination, and about the relationship between dads and daughters. That's one of the things I enjoy most in the writing process—discovering what a book is really about."

The School Story received glowing reviews from critics. "Children will . . . be drawn quickly into the story's action as the girls plan, connive, write and rewrite, and ultimately celebrate the book's publication," Chris Sherman wrote in *Booklist.* "Be prepared for kids lining up to read this one."

"Readers will grin from beginning to end of this enchanting story, except when brushing away the occasional tear during the more poignant moments," Matt Berman added in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. "Andrew Clements has found a niche that he fills better than anyone, and any child can tell you that there are an infinite variety of school stories to be told. Let's hope he writes many more."

> *"I started out thinking* The School Story *was about a young author getting her work published. But I gradually realized that the book is also about friendship and faith and determination, and about the relationship between dads and daughters. That's one of the things I enjoy most in the writing process—discovering what a book is really about."*

New Works

The school setting played an important role in his new book, *A Week in*

the Woods, published in 2002. Eleven-year-old Mark Chelmsley is the new kid at Hardy Elementary School. His family has just moved to rural New Hampshire from Scarsdale, New York. Mark knows that he will be leaving to attend boarding school in a few months, so he's not motivated to try to make friends or to please the teachers at his new school. And somehow he immediately alienates his science teacher, Mr. Maxwell, who dislikes rich kids and slackers and decides that Mark is a "spoiled rich kid." Mark arrives just before the annual school trip, a week-long camp out led by Mr. Maxwell called A Week in the Woods. But things soon go wrong, and the novel turns into a compelling and suspenseful survival story marked by the growth and maturation of both Mark and his teacher. "Clements's compassionate character studies are realistic and hopeful," Francisca Goldsmith wrote in *Booklist*, "and the characters' subtle conflicts and eventual transformation will linger with readers long after the book is finished."

Clements branched into science fiction in his novel *Things Not Seen*, published in 2002. It tells the story of 15-year-old Bobby, who wakes up one day to find that he is invisible. While Bobby works with his scientist father to find a way to become visible again, school authorities wonder why he has been missing classes and police begin investigating his parents. Bobby ends up developing a relationship with a blind girl at school who helps him cope with his problem. "Clements's story is full of life; it's poignant, funny, scary, and seemingly all too possible," Saleena L. Davidson wrote in *School Library Journal*. "The author successfully blends reality with fantasy in a tale that keeps his audience in suspense until the very end."

Advice to Young Readers

When young, aspiring writers ask for his advice, Clements first tells them to read lots of good books. "The way I really got started writing was by reading," he explained. "Before too long I found myself reading something

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good and saying to myself, 'I wish I had written that!' I think the more good books you read, the better you learn what good writing sounds like and feels like. Every good writer I know started off as a good reader."

Next, Clements suggests that young writers base their work on their own experiences. "I've discovered that writing is a lot like being a miner," he stated. "You do a lot of digging through this great mounded heap of your life experiences. And you sift and sort and dig through this mountain and find things that are interesting and valuable and useful."

Finally, Clements tells aspiring writers to make time to write. "Never sit around waiting to be struck by inspiration," he stated. "Get the story started on paper; the middle and end will come. Spend a lot of time writing—practice, practice. Observe details about things and about human nature. You can make your characters and their situations seem real if you supply enough details about them; then they appear to be living actual lives."

> *"The way I really got started writing was by reading. Before too long I found myself reading something good and saying to myself, 'I wish I had written that!' I think the more good books you read, the better you learn what good writing sounds like and feels like. Every good writer I know started off as a good reader."*

Spreading His Love of Words and Books

Although Clements enjoys many aspects of being a writer, he still finds the process of writing to be difficult. "Writing has always felt like hard work to me," he admitted. "It's still something I have to make myself do. Which is a good life lesson, don't you think? Just because something doesn't come easily for you does not mean that you can't get good at it."

One of Clements's favorite aspects of being a writer is sharing the power of words with young readers. "When I'm visiting a school, I sometimes ask kids, 'Imagine what it would be like if every day you had to pay even just one penny for every word you use,'" he noted. "Words are free, they can't be used up, they are ideas. They're what we use to dream with, and think with, and communicate good thoughts and bad thoughts, and dream and pray . . . and you know, they're pretty amazing things. I think the more kids become conscious of that, the more aware they become of the power of words. That awareness makes us better thinkers, and it certainly makes us better writers and speakers."

Clements is thankful that he is able to touch children through his books, just as books touched him as a child. "When a kid reads a book, the writer has his or her full attention—and any teacher will tell you that that's worth a lot," he stated. "It's a privilege to be able to write stories that may become part of another's childhood, and I'm grateful for it."

> *"When a kid reads a book, the writer has his or her full attention—and any teacher will tell you that that's worth a lot. It's a privilege to be able to write stories that may become part of another's childhood, and I'm grateful for it."*

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Clements married Rebecca Pierpont, an actress and homemaker, on December 16, 1972. They and their four sons—John, Nathaniel, George, and Charles—live in Westborough, Massachusetts, about 40 miles west of Boston. Clements does his writing on a laptop computer in a heated and air-conditioned shed in the backyard. "There's no telephone, no Internet, e-mail, or faxes," he explained. "When I go out there, it's just time to write. It's a good solution because we have a very busy, active home here."

SELECTED WRITINGS

Picture Books and Easy Readers

Bird Adalbert, 1985
Big Al, 1987
Santa's Secret Helper, 1990
Mother Earth's Counting Book, 1992
Billy and the Bad Teacher, 1992
Who Owns the Cow? 1995
Bright Christmas: An Angel Remembers, 1996
Riff's BeBop Book, 1996
Temple Cat, 1996
Real Monsters Go for the Mold! 1997
Things That Go EEK on Halloween, 1997
Real Monsters Stage Fright, 1997

Music Time, Any Time! 1997
Double Trouble in Walla Walla, 1997
Gromble's Haunted Halloween, 1998
Workshop, 1999
Circus Family Dog, 2000
Dolores and the Big Fire, 2000
Norman Saves the Day! 2000
Ringo Saves the Day! 2000
Jake Drake, Bully Buster, 2001
Jake Drake, Know-It-All, 2001
Jake Drake, Teacher's Pet, 2002
Jake Drake, Class Clown, 2002
Big Al and Shrimpy, 2002

Middle-Grade Novels

Frindle, 1996
The Landry News, 1999
The Janitor's Boy, 2000
The School Story, 2001
The Jacket, 2001
A Week in the Woods, 2002
Things Not Seen, 2002

HONORS AND AWARDS

Christopher Award: 1997, for *Frindle*
Best Kids Books (*Family Fun Magazine*): 1998, for *Frindle*

FURTHER READING

Books

Contemporary Authors, Vol. 171, 1999
Eighth Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators, 2000
Something about the Author, Vol. 104, 1999

Periodicals

Boston Globe, Feb. 19, 2001, p.C6; May 28, 2001, p.B10
Christian Science Monitor, July 3, 2001, p.22
Detroit Free Press, Mar. 29, 2001, sec. Yak's Corner, p.6
Miami Herald, Sep. 10, 1999, p.E1

New Orleans Times-Picayune, Aug. 26, 2001, sec. Books, p.7
New York Times, June 18, 2000, sec. 7, p.24
Publishers Weekly, Apr. 1, 2002, p.25
Washington Post, Aug. 7, 2002, p.C16

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WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

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http://www.bordersstores.com/features/feature.jsp?file=clements
http://www.looseleafbookcompany.org/archives/2042/tr8.html
http://www.ksu.edu/english/nelp/clements

Eoin Colfer 1965 -

Irish Children's Writer
Author of the Best-Selling *Artemis Fowl* Novels

BIRTH

Eoin Colfer was born in 1965 in Wexford, on the southeast coast of the Republic of Ireland. His father, Billy, is an elementary school teacher, artist, and historian. His mother, Noreen, is a drama teacher and actress. Colfer is the second of five sons. His first name is pronounced "Owen."

YOUTH

Colfer grew up in the seaside town of Wexford, a center for art and drama. The arts-loving Colfer family reflected this environment. Colfer's parents encouraged Eoin to love books and writing, as well as drama, art, and performing. At the same time, he sharpened his sense of humor with the help of his four brothers. ("Two of them are intelligent but I'm not saying which two," he said). Their dinner-table exchanges were full of sarcastic barbs and witty put-downs. Even from babyhood, the competitive boys had to keep on their toes. Colfer has been told that as a one-year-old, he was obsessed with walking on lines. His older brother Paul, age 3, was unhappy with the attention heaped on the baby. So he planned and plotted to get little Eoin to the dotted line in the middle of the road—and told him there was a chocolate bar at the end. With such constant "stimuli," along with an endless series of "discussions, projects, [and] artistic pursuits" among the Colfers, life was never dull.

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An eager reader, Colfer devoured everything from shampoo-bottle labels to the novels of Mark Twain, the 19th-century American humor writer. Colfer also absorbed the suspense and magic of traditional Irish legends and fairy stories. They were "everywhere," he said, during his boyhood. At the same time, he loved the modern superheroes depicted in cartoons. "I've always collected comics—Batman is my favorite—and enjoyed the dynamic characters," he said. By age 12, he had moved on to grown-up horror stories by Stephen King. He also enjoyed political thrillers by Robert Ludlum and Jack Higgins. Elements of all of these sources are vividly clear in Colfer's best-known work, the *Artemis Fowl* series. The popular novels combine futuristic fairies with fast pacing and irreverent humor that would be right at home at Colfer's childhood table.

Inspired by his reading, Colfer wrote and illustrated stories from the time he was in grade school. "I have wanted to write since I can remember, and I have been lucky enough to have had my parents' support every step of the way," he said. "I have also had the support of several English teachers who gave me high marks and gold stars. . . . I honestly believe that this fed my determination to become a writer." One of his more ambitious childhood efforts was a play about the Norse gods that he wrote in sixth grade. Everyone on stage died at the end—except for him.

EDUCATION

Colfer attended the local elementary school where his father taught. He graduated from a high school run by the Roman Catholic Christian Brothers of Ireland. "I loved English, drama, and art," he said. "I was never any good at geography and chemistry." Following in his parents' footsteps, Colfer trained to become a teacher. He attended Carysfort College in Dublin, Ireland's largest city. In 1986, he completed a three-year degree in elementary education.

FIRST JOBS

Colfer taught in Wexford for several years, focusing on kids with learning difficulties. He wrote in his spare time, composing stories and also plays for the local amateur theater group. At age 22, he wrote his first novel, sending it to publishers "with visions of black sedans pulling up to the house the next day," he said. "I thought I was the best writer on the planet." When publishers showed no interest, Colfer gave up writing for a time. In 1992, he and his wife left Ireland to teach for four years in Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Italy. These exotic settings inspired Colfer to take up writing again. "Material just kept beating me over the head until I finally relented and wrote my first actual book [*Benny and Omar*]," he said.

When he returned to Wexford, Colfer continued to teach full time, but he continued to write, too. Normally, he fit in only one hour a day, between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. That was the interval between the end of his school day and when his son Finn arrived home from his babysitter. He tried to squeeze in what he could in other spare moments: after Finn's 8:00 p.m. bedtime, Sundays, and on school vacations. After *Artemis Fowl* was sold as a book and movie for a record price in 2000, Colfer gave up his teaching job. But he doesn't plan to leave permanently. "I hope to get back to it," he said. "It's invaluable in letting me stay on the kids' wavelength."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

First Publications—Success in Ireland

Colfer's first publication was a novel for children that drew on his international experience. (Like all of his books until *Artemis Fowl*, it was originally

published only in Ireland.) *Benny and Omar* (1998) relates the adventures of an Irish boy and his Tunisian friend in North Africa. "I'd been writing stories for years before that, but it took a trip to Africa to give me really exciting subject matter," Colfer said. "The thing that hit me hardest was the difference in the quality of life for Europeans and Tunisians. Things that we take for granted, like running water and electricity, are often luxuries in Africa. I decided that the best way to bring this point home was to pair a Tunisian boy with an Irish chap and see what happened."

In the story, schoolboy Benny Shaw is miserable when his dad's job takes the family to Tunisia. His only relief for sadness and culture shock is his friendship with a local orphan, Omar. The Tunisian boy's English is limited to what he has learned from imported TV shows ("Good night, John Boy"). But the two become friends and begin to ricochet from one mishap to another. Soon, Omar involves Benny in a dangerous and thrilling adventure — to rescue his sister from an institution. The book was well-received as funny, sensitive, and well paced, and became a best-seller in Ireland.

A sequel, *Benny and Babe* (1999), appeared a year later. The book lands Benny back on his home turf. Sent to a small Irish seaside village for the summer, Benny is teased as a "townie" by the locals. He finds an unlikely friend in a tomboy named Babe, and the two dream up a scheme to retrieve the local fishermen's bait — and sell it back to them. When the town bully Furty Howlin threatens their business, they are drawn into a risky competition that forces them to rely on the bad guy's help. Colfer said that the setting of *Benny and Babe* is based on the village of Slade in County Wexford, where he and his brothers spent the summers of their childhood. "A lot of the struggles — boy/girl, townie/culchie [country person] — are updated versions of my own experiences as a boy," he said. Benny's Irish adventures clicked with critics and readers in Ireland, and *Benny and Babe* even knocked J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series off the top of the country's best-seller list.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

After writing for teenagers, Colfer was inspired to draw on even earlier experiences in several books for six-to-eight-year-olds. "There was a younger version [of me] who wanted to have his say," he said. "I created Ed Cooper to give voice to these memories." In *Going Potty* (1999), *Ed's Funny Feet* (2000), and *Ed's Bed* (2001), Colfer traces a young boy's misadventures to great humorous effect. In 2000, Colfer returned to writing for teenagers with a novel about a girl who is stuck between life and the afterlife. Meg Finn, the main character of *The Wish List*, dies in an ill-conceived attempt at robbery. She then finds she is considered to be too good for hell, but too bad for heaven. Meg gets a chance to go back to earth to redeem herself. In 2001 the novel won a Bisto Merit Award, a top Irish prize for children's literature.

Artemis Fowl

For his next project, Colfer wanted to put his own stamp on traditional Irish tales—and to reach an audience beyond Ireland. With *Artemis Fowl* (2001) he scored a success beyond his dreams. In the story of Artemis Fowl, a 12-year-old criminal mastermind, Colfer mixes fairies and magic with high-tech wizardry, tongue-in-cheek humor, and the pace of a Hollywood action film. "*Die Hard* with fairies" is how Colfer described it, referring to the action films starring Bruce Willis. Many readers find the combination—and the book's hero—irresistible. Artemis Fowl comes from a long line of notorious Irish criminals. "An anti-hero, a boy who [is] witty and sarcastic, always out for his own good," Colfer called him. "I wanted to create a character that could survive all sorts of villainy and be absorbing because he was so evil."

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Artemis Fowl comes from a long line of notorious Irish criminals. "An anti-hero, a boy who [is] witty and sarcastic, always out for his own good," Colfer called him. "I wanted to create a character that could survive all sorts of villainy and be absorbing because he was so evil."

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After his father disappears mysteriously, Artemis Fowl plots to restore his family's fortune. With the help of his loyal manservant, Butler, Artemis kidnaps a fairy and holds her ransom for a wealth of legendary fairy gold. But his hostage, Captain Holly Short, turns out to be a tough customer—part of "LEPrecon—an elite branch of the Lower Elements Police." Soon hordes of quirky, wise-cracking dwarfs, trolls, fairies, and satyrs are on the run to rescue her. In the fight that follows, clever Artemis turns the futuristic fairies' magic—and technology—against them. We learn that Artemis is not quite as dastardly as he seems.

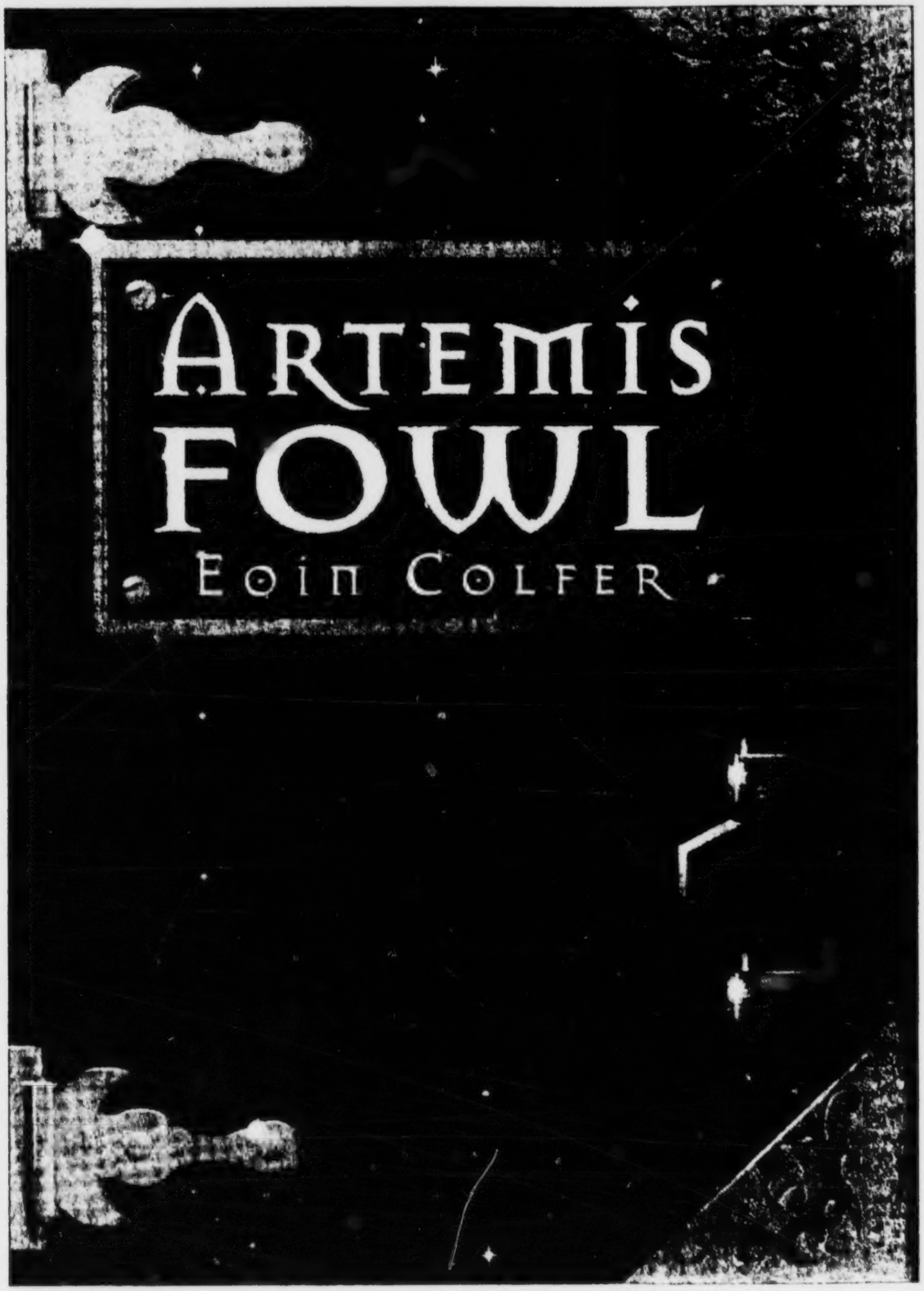
According to Colfer, it is no accident that the book overflows with technology. "Kids nowadays are much more technologically aware than adults, and their huge interest in magic has to do with what they see on computers, videos, and movies," he said. "It makes them better able to imagine how magic works." A fan asked Colfer how he dreamed up the idea of endowing traditional fairy creatures with up-to-the minute technology. "If we've gone forward with technology, why shouldn't they?" he replied. Colfer holds his readers' interest, and adds to their enjoyment, with a barrage of colorful language, puns, and word plays. The book also engages readers with a challenge to decipher the fairy language—which runs in code along the bottom of all the book's pages.

> *"Kids nowadays are much more technologically aware than adults, and their huge interest in magic has to do with what they see on computers, videos, and movies. It makes them better able to imagine how magic works."*

Worldwide Recognition

Reviewers generally praised Colfer's wise-cracking language, keen sense of humor, and headlong pacing in *Artemis Fowl*. But some disliked the book's violence and its lack of a traditional hero. These reviewers deemed Artemis Fowl too bad to be likable, "repellent in almost every regard," said a writer in *Time* magazine. But Colfer points out that he was tapping into boyhood tastes when he created the character. "When I was growing up, I was always drawn to the villains," Colfer said. "I liked Darth Vader, Moriarty, and Hannibal Lecter." He said Artemis was inspired by a long line of anti-heroes, from Bart Simpson, to Captain Hook in *Peter Pan*, to Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn, one of Colfer's favorite characters. "Huck was a smoker, a drinker, and a truant," Colfer said. "He used to swear, and his best friend was a black man, and that was really controversial at the time. Compared to him, Artemis is quite tame." Besides, Colfer added, Artemis is not totally a bad guy, but "a good guy who does bad things." And Colfer insisted that the young villain's values improve over the course of the book. "Artemis starts out thinking money is everything," Colfer said. "But by the end he realizes his parents are more important."

Hero or villain, Artemis Fowl created a storm among publishers, who viewed him as a counterpart to Harry Potter, with similar sales potential.



Colfer found his book a sought-after prize. After word of the manuscript traveled around the book industry, a bidding war broke out at an international book fair. Colfer received a record payment for a movie deal and the publishing rights in England, the United States, and many other countries.

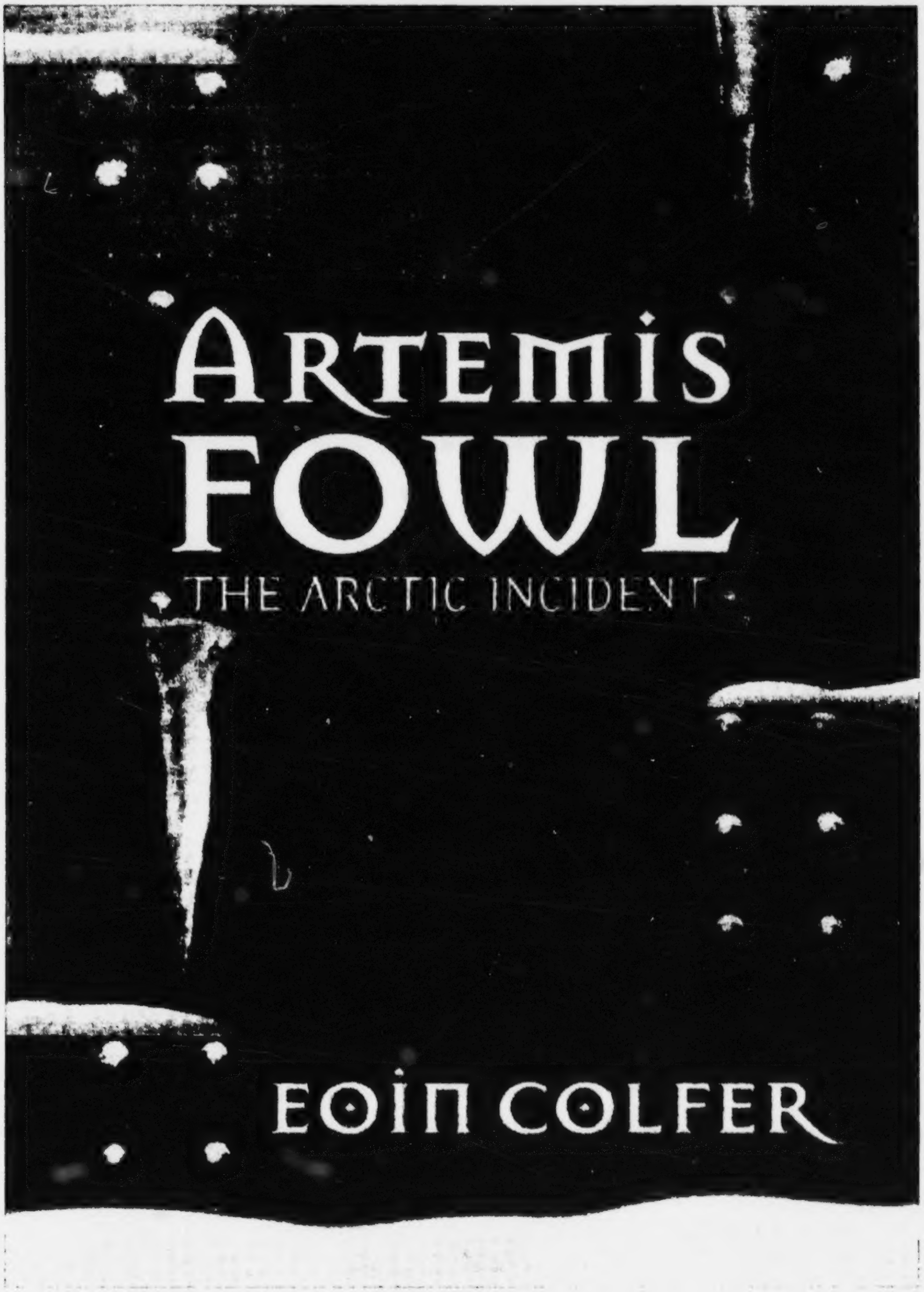
As a result, *Artemis Fowl* was the focus of massive media attention and hype even before it was published. Many suspected Colfer of creating a Harry Potter wanna-be. But Colfer said he had no intention to create an evil Harry, as some suggested. "When I was told [Artemis Fowl] was 'the next Harry Potter,' I was worried," said Colfer, who at that time hadn't read the Potter books. He is satisfied now that there is little similarity. "It's nice to be compared with someone so good . . . but you also want to be seen as original, and Artemis Fowl wasn't meant to be like Harry Potter," he said. Whether because of the Harry comparisons or not, *Artemis Fowl* rocketed to the top of best-seller lists. "It's been such a whirlwind, that I don't really believe it's happening," Colfer said. "I feel like there's some other guy, and he's having all this luck."

> *"When I was told [Artemis Fowl] was 'the next Harry Potter,' I was worried," said Colfer, who at that time hadn't read the Potter books. "It's nice to be compared with someone so good . . . but you also want to be seen as original, and Artemis Fowl wasn't meant to be like Harry Potter."*

While he is "still coming to grips" with the surprise of his worldwide success, Colfer hasn't lost any time in updating readers on Artemis's adventures. In *Artemis Fowl: The Arctic Incident* (2002), he teams up, uneasily, with his former enemy Holly Short. Together they try to halt a fairy rebellion below ground. They also set out for the Arctic Circle to rescue Fowl's father from the Russian mafia. Dogging them throughout are their archrivals, goblin B'wa Kell Triad and Opal Kobbai, a wily beauty who plots to take over the fairies' LEPrecon unit. The cast of colorful fairy-underworld characters from the first book, including Mulch Diggins, the kleptomaniac dwarf, and Foaly, the paranoid centaur, reappear in the second book. While some critics noted that the second Artemis installment lacked the sparkle of the first, the book was received enthusiastically by fans and many reviewers. It won the Bisto Merit Award in Ireland, and in the United Kingdom, it received the W.H. Smith Award for Best Book of the Year, a major literary prize that is voted on by readers themselves.

Future Projects

Artemis's third adventure, *Artemis Fowl: The Entity*, is due in spring 2003. Colfer originally planned to limit Artemis Fowl to three books. "I was



going to finish off in a trilogy," he said. "But halfway through the third book I had what I think is a great idea." He also has ideas for at least seven more books for young readers. "I'm working on a plan for a kids' thriller," he said. "I like to take books into areas for kids that they don't usually get. I think kids 'get' thrillers but they are often quite patronizing." Colfer is eager to explore other projects, and he is reportedly working on a musical (a play with songs integrated into the action). Whatever is up next for Colfer, he's likely to plunge his characters into difficult situations. "I've always loved the idea of kids out of their element, struggling to survive in a strange environment," he said. "It's a recurrent theme in my work."

MAJOR INFLUENCES

Colfer says that he was influenced by several writers. He was particularly influenced by Mark Twain, his favorite author as a child. But his favorite children's book of all is *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman. Irish authors Roddy Doyle and Patrick McCabe are his top writers for adults. And to this day he still loves comic books. "Comic books are a huge influence on me," he said. "I think they're a very underrated art form."

But there have been other influences on Colfer's works besides these writers. The sarcastic, rebellious side of Artemis Fowl comes from Colfer's memories of trading insults and jokes with his brothers. Working as a teacher also helped him understand what kids liked to read and what held their interest. He enjoyed reading to his students for ten minutes at the end of every school day. "I'd find myself elaborating if I saw their interest flagging. I'd add in gory bits. In the end I made up my own stories," he said. He also admits taking some of the kids' funnier remarks and using them verbatim.

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Colfer offers this advice to young writers: "If writing is your passion, then you should read as much as you can. Think of it as research. Also, keep an ideas folder on your computer, write everything down even if it is not relevant to what you are working on at the moment."

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ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS

Colfer offers this advice to young writers: "If writing is your passion, then you should read as much as you can. Think of it as research. Also, keep an ideas folder on your computer, write everything down even if it is not relevant to what you are working on at the moment."

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

"Writing was my hobby until recently," Colfer said. "Now that it has become my work, I will have to find a new hobby. I have started walking recently." Besides walking for leisure, Colfer maintains interests from his childhood. He still collects comic books, for example. "Batman is my favorite," he said. "I'd love to see someone make a comic out of Artemis." Doodling cartoons is another pastime Colfer has enjoyed since he was a boy. He has never given up amateur drama, and he has acted in and directed productions. He also continues to write plays. *Lords of Love*, written almost as a joke at the request of his brother Donal, won the 1999 All-Ireland One-Act final, a national competition for the best short play. He likes the "immediacy" of writing for the theater. "There's nothing like seeing people laughing at your lines," he said.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Colfer met his wife Jackie at a *ceili* (a traditional Irish dance) when they were in high school. They married in 1991. A former schoolteacher, she now co-owns and operates a clothing boutique. They live in Wexford with their son, Finn, who was born in 1997. When a fan asked him about his best gift ever, Colfer said, "I think the best stuff you get is always family stuff, like a smile from your baby boy, things like that." He said the worst part of his recent success is having to travel far from home to publicize his books. "You'd think it would be the other way around, since my little boy climbs in our bed every night and I get toes up the nose," he once said. "But I can't sleep when I'm not at home."

WRITINGS

Benny and Omar, 1998
Going Potty, 1999
Benny and Babe, 1999
Ed's Funny Feet, 2000
The Wish List, 2000
Artemis Fowl, 2001
Ed's Bed, 2001
Artemis Fowl: The Arctic Incident, 2002

HONORS AND AWARDS

White Raven Award: 1998, for *Benny and Omar*
Bisto Children's Book of the Year Merit Award (Ireland): 2001, for *The Wish List*; 2002, for *Artemis Fowl: The Arctic Incident*
British Book Award for Children's Book: 2001, for *Artemis Fowl: The Arctic Incident*

Best Children's Book of the Year (W.H. Smith, England): 2001, for *Artemis Fowl: The Arctic Incident*

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Seattle Post Intelligencer, June 8, 2001, p.C1
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Sharon Flake 1955-

American Writer for Young Adults
Author of *The Skin I'm In* and *Money Hungry*

BIRTH

Sharon Flake was born on December 24, 1955, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her father, Henry Flake, installed pipes for the gas company and her mother, Roberta (Rosseau) Flake, was a homemaker who also performed "day work" cleaning people's houses. Sharon was the fifth of the Flake's six children. She has two older sisters, Veronica and Daphne; two older brothers, Larry and Gregory; and a young brother, Reginald.

YOUTH

As the next-to-youngest child in a large family, Sharon was accustomed to being surrounded by her siblings and always felt more secure when she had her older brothers and sisters to hide behind. Although she had a reputation for having a "big mouth" and for expressing her feelings and opinions without hesitation, this was really a cover-up for the insecure girl she was inside.

The Flakes' North Philadelphia neighborhood was a close one. They lived on a small street where all the neighbors knew each other and looked out for each other's kids. "When my mom went to work," she recalls, "we had to stay in the house or on the porch. And if we didn't, one of the neighbors would say something." With so many siblings around, Sharon says that she was never at a loss for activity or companionship. There was lots of laughter in the house — she describes her family as "hilarious" and their humor as "sharp-edged." "We were very 'in your face,'" Sharon says. "We would just come out and say things."

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> ***As a teenager, Flake pretended to have a lot of self-confidence but in reality, "I didn't think I was pretty or smart enough. I would stay in my house a lot and read books and watch TV rather than going out."***
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> **"**

Although she was outgoing as a young child, by the time she reached middle school Sharon was spending most of her time at home. She pretended to have a lot of self-confidence but in reality, she recalls, "I didn't think I was pretty or smart enough. I would stay in my house a lot and read books and watch TV rather than going out."

EDUCATION

Flake attended Lehigh Elementary School, Cooke Junior High, and Simon Gratz High School, all in Philadelphia. She describes herself as a conscientious student who usually got Bs. "One of my friends once said that if the school was on fire, I'd probably ask permission from the principal to leave," she says. Although she did well on the tennis team, she never went to school dances, proms, or big sporting events.

As she approached graduation, Sharon remembers thinking briefly about going to Temple University to study journalism. Her father was a "news junkie" who knew a lot about history and had encouraged discussion and debate among his children about world events. But it was only a passing thought, and by the time she graduated in 1973, her plans for the future had changed.

Flake enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh because she thought she wanted to be a doctor. But she had a hard time in her chemistry class and decided to change her major to business. She ran into similar problems when she took accounting. "Then I noticed I was getting good grades in writing," she explains, "so I said, 'Okay' and decided to be a writing major." She had trouble with grammar and spelling, however, and when her professors gave her A's she just assumed they were doing it to be nice. Even though she had a strong feeling that writing was what she was meant to do, it never occurred to her that she might have any real talent.

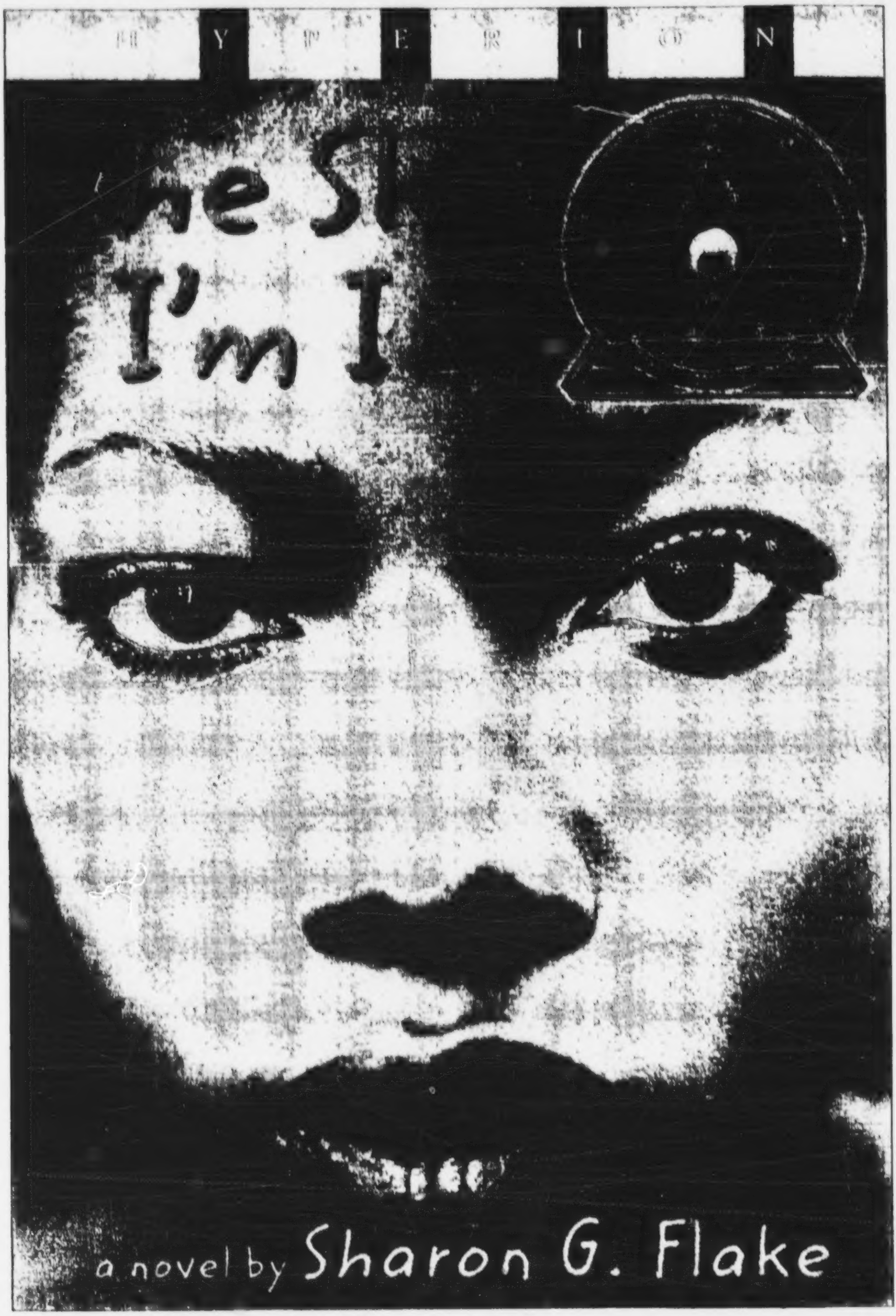
While she was still in college, Flake was invited to do an internship at a local newspaper. Once again, she was undermined by her lack of self-confidence. Even though the newspaper called her three times, she never responded. "I'm not a writer," she remembers saying to herself. "I just have a big mouth and talked my way into that job." She later realized that she was too scared to take advantage of the opportunity that had been offered to her. "I was always afraid that I wasn't good enough, that my grammar had to be perfect, that I had to know all the rules to be a writer," she explains.

Flake earned a B.A. in English from the University of Pittsburgh in 1978, She had written a number of short stories but still didn't regard herself as disciplined enough to be a "real" writer.

BECOMING A WRITER

After graduating from college, Flake spent a year working as a house parent at a residential group facility in Pittsburgh where kids were often placed by the courts. Then she worked as a counselor at the Center for the Assessment and Treatment of Youth. The job required frequent travel and she accepted it before she had even learned to drive, but she managed to get her driver's license in time.

In 1982 Flake got a job at the University of Pittsburgh and spent 10 years working on the public relations staff. Then, in 1992, she landed a job at the University's Katz Graduate School of Business. As director of public relations there, she was responsible for writing ads, press releases, and brochures. She also had to put out three publications a year and oversee a budget of $300,000. Flake says it was this job that finally made her feel more confident and comfortable with herself. In other jobs she'd held, she'd always had other people to hide behind. But at Katz, she says, "I was the only one doing public relations. For the first time, I couldn't hide out."



Flake's first big break as a writer came in 1992. This was the year she attended a writers' conference at Chautauqua, a summer resort and adult education institution in New York state. There she met Patricia Gauch, an

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editor who gave her feedback on her work, and Joy Cowley, a children's author with whom she continued to correspond after the conference was over. It was also in 1992 that she won the August Wilson Short Story Award, sponsored by the church in Pittsburgh that the prize-winning playwright had once attended. Flake's story, called "The Luckiest Sister," was about twin eight-year-old sisters, one of whom was light-skinned with straight hair while the other was dark-skinned with kinky hair. Told from the perspective of the lighter-skinned sister, the story explored the ways in which the world treated her twin differently, based on her physical characteristics. When it appeared in *AIM* (America's Intercultural Magazine), it was Flake's first published story.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Flake was also working on a story about a teacher and a young student, which she sent to Joy Cowley, her friend from Chautauqua, for comments. Cowley told her that she thought Flake's real strength lay in portraying teenagers. So Flake reworked the story and made the student older. After finding a list of African-American publishers in *Essence* magazine, she sent a synopsis of her story and the first three chapters to one of them. The response was positive, but Flake was told that the book "wasn't quite ready for publication." The editor made some suggestions and Flake went back to work on it, often setting her alarm for 3:00 a.m. so she could write for a couple of hours before her young daughter woke up. Within three months, she had a contract with Hyperion Books, but her editor told her that still more re-writing was needed. Among other things, she suggested that Flake re-write the entire book from the young girl's point of view.

> **"**
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> ***"I'm not a writer," Flake remembers saying to herself when she was offered a newspaper job. "I just have a big mouth and talked my way into that job. . . . I was always afraid that I wasn't good enough, that my grammar had to be perfect, that I had to know all the rules to be a writer."***
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> **"**

The Skin I'm In

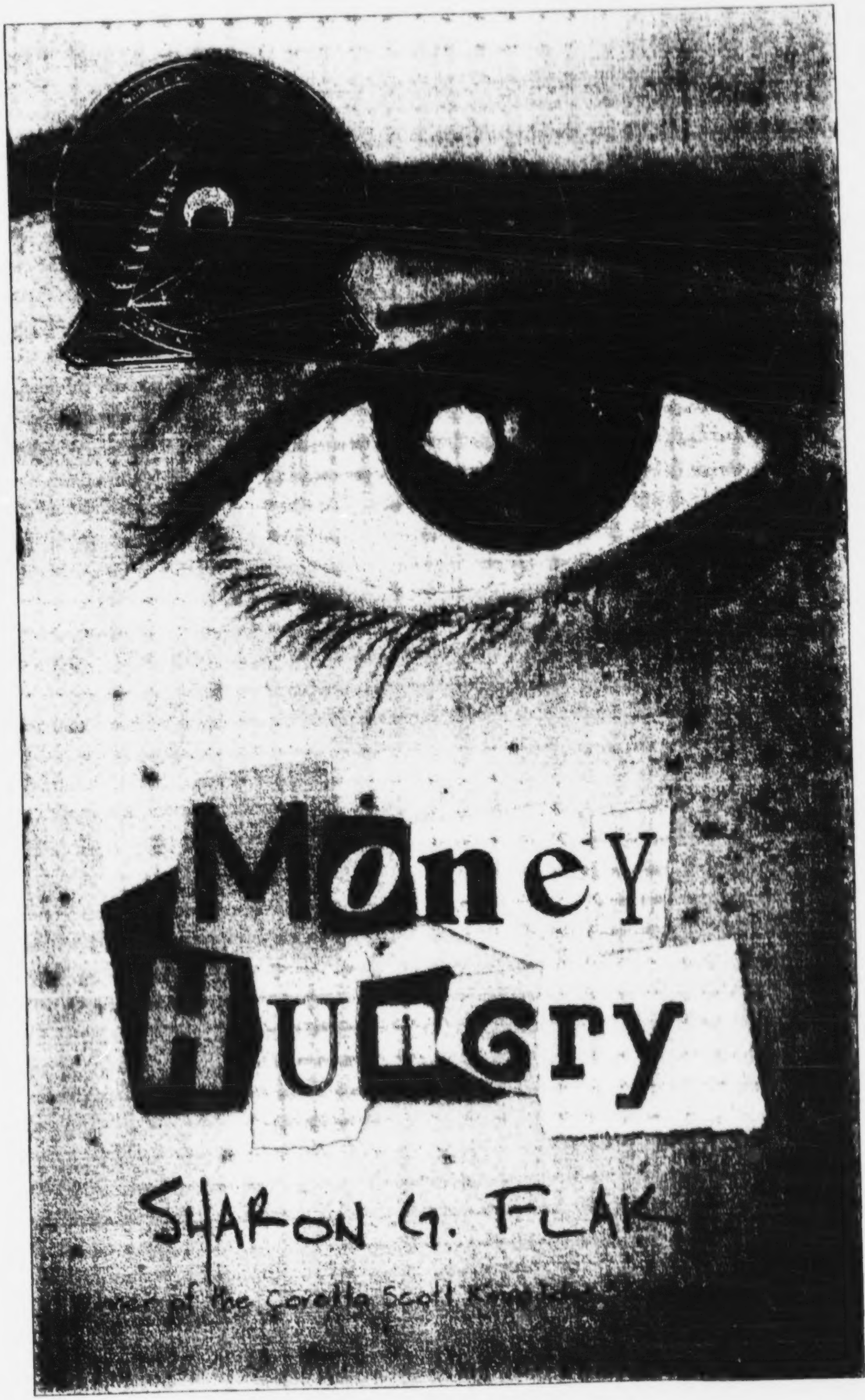
It took Flake two years to finish writing *The Skin I'm In* (1998), a novel aimed primarily at black teenagers but with a message for adolescents of every race. It tells the story of 13-year-old Maleeka Madison, a seventh grader at a predominantly black inner-city middle school. Maleeka doesn't really fit in with her peers because she is taller, smarter, and darker-skinned than they are. She also wears clothes that are obviously homemade, and she longs for a wardrobe that will make her look more like a "bad girl" and less like the good student that she really is.

Maleeka is befriended by a new English teacher at the school named Miss Saunders. In addition to being very tall, overweight, and having a man's first name (Michael), Miss Saunders has a rare skin condition. Maleeka describes her as having "a giant white stain spread halfway across her face like somebody tossed acid on it or something." As part of a writing assignment for Miss Saunders, Maleeka starts keeping a diary based on the adventures of a young African girl named Akeelma who comes to America on a slave ship. At the same time, Maleeka is being urged to skip class and neglect her responsibilities as an assistant in the school office by Charlese, the leader of a group of "tough girls" to which Maleeka wants very much to belong. At one point in the book, she even lets Charlese talk her into vandalizing Miss Saunders' classroom.

By writing the story of Akeelma, Maleeka comes to understand herself better and to appreciate what her mother has gone through as a single parent. She ends up winning a writing contest, standing up to Charlese, and more importantly, accepting herself for what she is. "I am not ugly," she is finally able to admit. "I am not stupid. I am Maleeka Madison, and . . . black is the skin I'm in!" The book, which is dedicated to Flake's own daughter, was immediately praised by critics for its portrayal of what life is like not only for a young African-American girl but for all adolescents. It won a Coretta Scott King Award and was named a Best Book for Young Adult Readers by the American Library Association. It also became the first in a new series of books, called "Jump at the Sun," published by Hyperion and aimed at young African-American readers.

Money Hungry

With one successful novel behind her, Flake started writing her second book, *Money Hungry* (2001). It's about a 13-year-old girl named Raspberry Hill. Raspberry and her mother leave her father, who is a drug addict, and end up sleeping on friends' couches and even on the street before finally moving to a housing project. Because she knows what it is like to be homeless, Raspberry becomes obsessed with earning money. She does everything she can think of—selling pencils and holiday candy that she buys on sale, cleaning houses for old people, washing cars at stoplights, and even skipping lunch so she can hoard her lunch money—to earn enough to guarantee that she and her mother will never end up on the



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street again. Eventually her obsession with money starts to cause problems with her friends Mai, Zora, and Ja'Nae—especially when she dips into her hoard of cash to lend Ja'Nae $200 and then worries constantly about whether she's ever going to get it back. Soon Raspberry's mother discovers how much money her daughter has hidden in her room, which precipitates a series of events that forces Raspberry and her mother to work things out.

Although some reviewers criticized the book's ending for being too much like a fairy tale, *Money Hungry* proved that Flake was more than a "one-book wonder" and put to rest the author's own fears that she wouldn't be able to succeed a second time. It was named a Coretta Scott King Honor Book by the American Library Association in 2002.

> *"Don't give up!" Flake tells young writers. "Everyone was put here to do something specific and special. Don't let anybody tell you you can't do it. When you get scared, do it anyway. One day you'll wonder what you were afraid of in the first place."*

Fiction or Autobiography?

Why are the lead characters in Flake's first two books 13-year-old girls? She remembers being told once that writers are motivated to write about situations in their own lives that they have never been able to put to rest. "The seventh grade was very difficult for me," she explains. "I stayed in the house, watched old movies, read books. I was very shy and insecure." She says that when she sits down to write, she still feels like a 13-year-old.

Although she would never describe her books as autobiographical, Flake admits that her characters have some obvious connections to her life. For one thing, they are young girls who live with their mothers, and Flake is a single mother. But rather than basing her characters on herself or her daughter, Flake creates characters who reflect the way she feels about herself. "Recently I've realized that at her core, Maleeka is me," she admits. "We've dealt with the same issues. We're both very verbal, but insecure."

Through her writing, Flake has finally been able to overcome the lack of self-confidence she felt as a teenager. "I'm so comfortable with myself now," she says. "It's an amazing place to be when for so long I ran from it and felt that I didn't have the talent, wasn't good enough." She goes on to admit that "For the first time, I feel at peace with my writing. . . . I feel like I can finally exhale."

Flake's third young adult novel, *Begging for Change,* is due out in the spring of 2003. This sequel to *Money Hungry* is her best work so far, according to the author. She is also working on a collection of short stories called *Who Am I Without Him?* The story focuses on relationships between girls and boys, and Flake says it is aimed at a teenage audience.

HOME AND FAMILY

Flake lives in the Stanton Heights area of Pittsburgh with her 15-year-old daughter, Brittney Banks. Although she has never married, Flake describes Brittney's dad as "very supportive." She recently traded her full-time job at the Katz Graduate School of Business for a part-time position as publications director so that she has more time to devote to her writing and speaking engagements.

ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS

When she speaks to school-age writers, Flake urges them to overcome their own insecurities. "Don't give up!" she says. "Everyone was put here to do something specific and special. Don't let anybody tell you you can't do it. When you get scared, do it anyway. One day you'll wonder what you were afraid of in the first place."

FAVORITE AUTHORS

Flake enjoys reading other young adult authors, particularly Walter Dean Myers, Sharon Draper, and Nikki Grimes. She also reads a lot of adult novels. "I'm the kind of reader who just goes to the bookstore, and if I like the jacket and what it says on the back, I'll pick [the book] up!" (For more information on Myers, see *Biography Today,* Jan. 1993 and Update in the 1994 Annual Cumulation; for more information on Draper, see *Biography Today,* Apr. 1999. Grimes will be featured in *Biography Today Authors,* Vol. 14.)

Langston Hughes, the well-known African-American poet who died in 1967, has always been one of Flake's favorites. She says he "writes about black people, giving them a lot of dignity and wisdom, and I think that's what I do with my characters."

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

When she isn't busy writing, Flake enjoys attending her daughter's track meets. She also likes to garden and is especially fond of growing flowers.

WRITINGS

The Skin I'm In, 1998
Money Hungry, 2001

SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award (American Library Association): 1999, for *The Skin I'm In*
Best Children's Books (Bank Street College of Education): 1999, for *The Skin I'm In*
Books for the Teen Age (New York Public Library): 1999, for *The Skin I'm In*; 2002 for *Money Hungry*
Best Books for Young Adult Readers (American Library Association): 1999, for *The Skin I'm In*
Top Ten Books for Youth (*Booklist*): 1999, for *The Skin I'm In*
YWCA Racial Justice Award (YWCA): 1999, for *The Skin I'm In*
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship: 2001

FURTHER READING

Periodicals

New Pittsburgh Courier, Sep. 18, 1999, p.3; June 16, 2001, p.3
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Dec. 6, 1998, p.G8; June 14, 2001, p.C14; Jan. 23, 2002, p.N1

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WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

http://www.sharonflake.com (new web site to be launched in 2003)
http://www.discover.pitt.edu/media/pcc010625/flake.html
http://www.pitt.edu/utimes/issues/31/100198/15.html
http://www2.nypl.org/home/branch/kids/read2002/chats/flake_txt.html

RETROSPECTIVE

Edward Gorey 1925-2000

American Author and Artist
Creator of Nearly 100 Comic and Creepy Books,
Including *The Doubtful Guest* and *The Hapless Child*

BIRTH

Edward St. John Gorey was born in Chicago, Illinois, on February 22, 1925. His father, Edward Leo, was a journalist who later worked in politics and public relations. His mother, Helen (Garvey), was a government clerk. He was an only child.

Gorey signed his books in different ways. He used his own name, Edward Gorey, and he also wrote under a series of pseudonyms, or false names. Many of these were anagrams of his real name; that means he used the same letters, but in different order. The pseudonyms included Mrs. Regera Dowdy, Ogdred Weary, Drew Dogyear, Wardore Edgy, Raddory Gewe, Roy Grewdead, Redway Grode, O. Mude, and Eduard Blutig.

YOUTH

Gorey is famous for his dark and quirky books. But he didn't have the weird childhood that some fans expect (and perhaps secretly hope for). "I was out playing kick-the-can along with everyone else," he said. But he was an extremely early reader and dug into some eerie books that influenced him for life, including the vampire classic *Dracula* by Bram Stoker. "I learned to read by myself when I was three-and-a-half or something," he said. "I can remember reading *Dracula* when I was about seven, and it scared me to death." *Frankenstein,* the 19th-century monster novel by Mary Shelley, was another early selection. At the same time, Gorey loved nonsense writers, and was a fan of Lewis Carroll (*Alice in Wonderland*) and Edward Lear, a 19th-century writer and artist (best known for "The Owl and the Pussycat"). He had a fascination for Victorian England, the period from 1837 to 1901 when Queen Victoria was on the throne. Although Gorey was especially drawn to that era, he also devoured all sorts of current popular fiction, especially mysteries by Agatha Christie. "Both my parents were mystery-story addicts, and I read thousands of them myself," he said. "Agatha Christie is still my favorite author in all the world." Gorey attempted to write, but without much direction. "I wasn't writing seriously, exactly, but I have a vague recollection of writing things apart from school assignments," he said.

> *"I learned to read by myself when I was three-and-a-half or something," Gorey said. "I can remember reading* Dracula *when I was about seven, and it scared me to death."*

The budding writer also loved to draw. He made his first attempts at the age of 18 months, drawing trains he could see from his grandparents' window. "They showed no talent whatever," Gorey said. "They looked rather like irregular sausages." He was fascinated by Victorian book illustrations, which appeared "sinister" to him. These were black-and-white engravings—images etched on stone or metal, then printed in ink. Among early favorites were the distinctive Sir John Tenniel illustrations for *Alice in Wonderland*. Gorey said he would vaguely imitate the 19th-century style. "I've never been very good at imitating anything, so it came out different," he said. His mother painted a little, but Gorey said the only professional artist in the family was a more distant ancestor. "My great-grandmother—my mother's father's mother—is the single person, I guess, from whom I inherited my, well, talent," Gorey said. "Helen St. John Garvey was her name. She supported the family in the mid-19th century by, oh, illustrating greeting cards and writing mottoes." Though he was encouraged at art no more than other children, Gorey said, "I suppose somewhere along the line I separated myself from the other people who were drawing; I became serious in the sense that I kept doing it when other people my age had stopped."

Like many children growing up in the 1930s, before television, Gorey adored movies. His favorites were horror films and serials (ongoing stories released in regular installments). He also enjoyed pastimes like the board game Monopoly. "It came out when I was about ten, and for months we didn't do anything else," he said. While he recalled his childhood as mainly happy, Gorey felt the stress of being an only child. "I think I might have been better off if my parents hadn't paid so much attention to me," he said. Another difficulty was the family's habit of moving frequently, "which I hated," he said. "We moved around a lot. I've never understood why. We moved around Rogers Park in Chicago, from one street to another, about every year." By age 11, he had gone to five different schools. The same year, his parents divorced. His father remarried, and Gorey gained a glamorous stepmother, Corinna Mura. She was a singer famous for performing the French song "La Marseillaise" in *Casablanca*, the classic 1942 movie starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. Gorey's parents apparently stayed on good terms, however, and they remarried each other when Gorey was 27.

EDUCATION

In elementary school, Gorey was a good student who skipped first and fifth grades. In high school, he attended Francis W. Parker, a progressive private school in Chicago. Among a class of high achievers, he stood out because of his talent and sense of humor. He also began to reveal the vivid sense of individuality that would mark him all his life. "Once, he painted his toenails green and walked barefoot down Michigan Avenue, which was really shocking in those days," a classmate said. Gorey considered himself "super-sophisticated,"as he explained: "We had dinner dances and country-club parties and everybody had girlfriends. . . . I remember thinking of myself as grown-up." He took occasional Saturday classes at the Art Institute of Chicago. After high school, he spent a semester at the institute, the last of his formal art training. "I think of myself as largely self-taught [in art]," he said. "Whenever I did take any courses, I didn't absorb very much." Gorey moved briefly to the University of Chicago. But the Second World War intervened after Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor in 1941. The country went to war, and Gorey was drafted into the Army. He served in a non-combat role for almost three years, working in the Utah desert.

After the war, Gorey enrolled at Harvard University as a French major. He remembered his courses as "dim proceedings" during which he "went to sleep after lunch." But if the classes were dull, the company was not. His friends and acquaintances included many gifted writers who went on to become famous: Alison Lurie, John Ashbery, V.R. Lang, and Gorey's roommate, the poet Frank O'Hara. "We all sort of gravitated together," Gorey said. "Most of us took [poet] John Ciardi's courses in creative writing. I wrote short stories and long poems. . . . All of us were *obsessed*. Obsessed by what? Ourselves, I expect." By this time, Gorey had started to wear the jewelry and flowing, vaguely old-fashioned coats that would become his trademark. One classmate remembered him as "the oddest person I'd ever seen. He seemed very, very tall, with his hair plastered down across the front, like a Roman emperor. He was wearing rings on his fingers." Gorey graduated from Harvard with a Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.) in 1950.

While he was at Harvard and afterward, Gorey was involved in the Poets' Theater of Cambridge, Massachusetts. He worked there in many roles, including writer and director. "I loved it. It was kind of a goofy amateur theater where we all did the very arty plays and so forth," he said. "It was great fun, but when I came to New York, I didn't particularly care for the equivalent of it." Theater remained a strong interest for Gorey, who found his way back to it later in his career.

FIRST JOBS

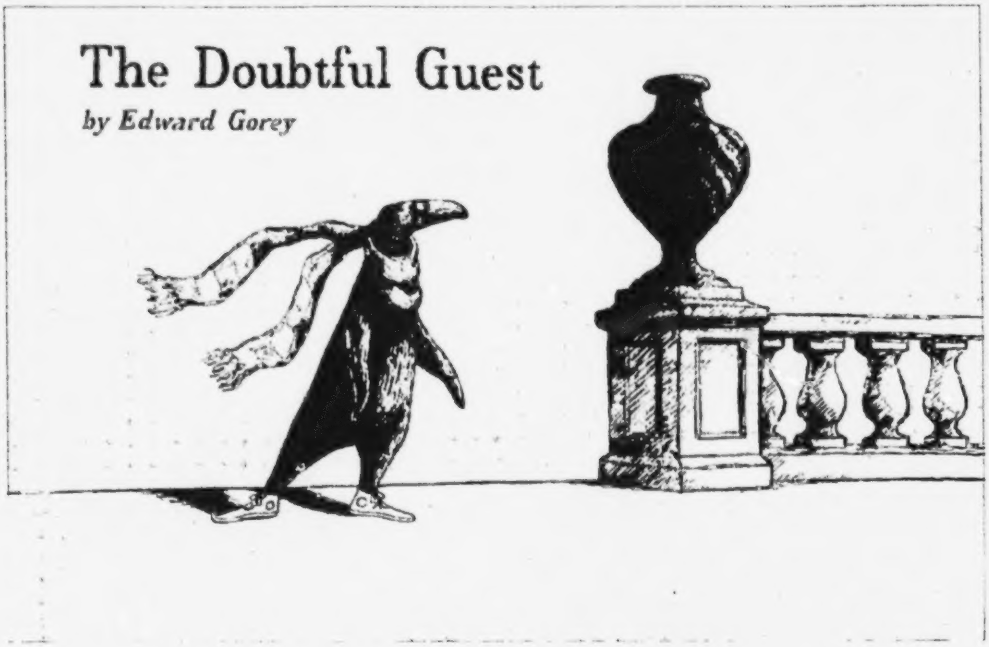
Gorey's artistic talent and love of books led him eventually to work on the design side of publishing. After college graduation, he remained for almost three years in Boston, where he dabbled in the Poet's Theater and illustrated some book-covers. (These early works are collector's items now.) But he struggled to find a career path. "At one point I thought, 'Oh, wouldn't it be nice to have a bookstore?' Then I worked in several and realized it would *not* be nice," he said. "Then I wanted to get into publishing for no other particular reason than it seemed a genteel thing to do."

With the help of some college friends, he was hired into the art department of Doubleday and Company Publishers in New York City in 1953. He spent seven years creating book covers for other authors' works and doing over-all book design, including the layout and typography. In 1960, he moved to the Looking-Glass Library. A new publishing line devoted to classic children's books, it folded within a couple of years. After a brief stint with Bobbs-Merrill publishers, he left conventional employment in 1963. "I never had the guts to say purposefully, 'OK, I'm quitting my job, I'm freelancing," he said. "And it was years before I realized that was what I was actually doing."

> *Gorey struggled to find a career path. "At one point I thought, 'Oh, wouldn't it be nice to have a bookstore?' Then I worked in several and realized it would not be nice. Then I wanted to get into publishing for no other particular reason than it seemed a genteel thing to do."*

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

During all the years he worked in publishing, Gorey diligently wrote and illustrated his own stories. He had absorbed the worlds of hundreds of books, illustrations, and films. Now he created a universe unmistakably his own. Gorey created a distinctive visual style, with black-and-white drawings finely detailed in pen and ink, that was established from the start of his career. His drawings often include complicated patterns. Prim, expressionless characters wear the clothing and hairstyles of distant eras: handlebar mustaches, sweeping gowns, bulky fur coats, and feather headdresses. Figures are either trapped in gloom suggested by hundreds of cross-hatched (criss-crossed) lines, or they float against blank whiteness. Either way, their universe appears stifling and unnatural. Unrecognizable creatures slither along the edges of the frame. Recurring images of bicycles, umbrellas, cat, sneakers, and funerary urns add to the sense of oddness. And even odder are the catastrophes that regularly befall Gorey's characters.



In concise, wry texts, often in rhyme, Gorey relates people's horrific fates. The words usually are hand-lettered by Gorey in elegant, old-fashioned letters. Masonry hurtles from the sky, children are carried off by huge flying creatures, a beloved baby inexplicably changes into a dog. At face value, the events are macabre — strange and ghastly. But in the end the proceedings are more comic than frightening. As Stephen Schiff put it in *The New Yorker*, "Reading Gorey is like losing your innocence — except that, as the creepiness mounts, something else takes over. His victims are too vacuous to inspire pity and terror, and his tone is too cool to make you wring your hands. The only recourse is to laugh, and you do."

First Publications

Gorey's first book, *The Unstrung Harp; or, Mr. Earbrass Writes a Novel,* came out in 1953, the year he moved to New York City. It had the traits that would make him famous: dark humor and funny, black cross-hatch drawings. Gorey said he had a natural preference for black-and-white artwork. But working in publishing, he realized that it was practical, too. "My seeming predilection for black and white is partially accountable to the fact that I knew from the beginning it was almost impossible to get my sort of book published in color on account of the expense," he said. "I ended up thinking in black and white." Gorey also thought small. Like most of his subsequent self-illustrated books, the artwork measured only about four by four inches; the finished book was very small.

The Unstrung Harp depicts the terrors of the literary life. Mr. Earbrass, an author, is stuck in a nightmare: Every other November 17 he must produce a novel called *The Unstrung Harp*. Already in place here is Gorey's characteristic absurd comic plot. Also present are the typical, claustrophobic drawings. (The hero is surrounded by old-fashioned busts and statues that look like himself.) In addition, Gorey shows his knack for the hilarious names that pepper his work. (Mr. Earbrass lives in Hobbies Odd, near the town of Collapsed Pudding, in the county of Mortshire.) But, while the book attracted attention in New York literary circles, it did not sell well. Nevertheless, Gorey retained his publisher for *The Listing Attic* in 1954. This was an illustrated collection of limericks (a humorous form of poetry that consists of five lines: the first, second and fifth rhyme; and the third and fourth lines also rhyme.) The verses, some in French, described the awful mishaps of comically frenzied characters.

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The Doubtful Guest and Other Unexpected Works for Children

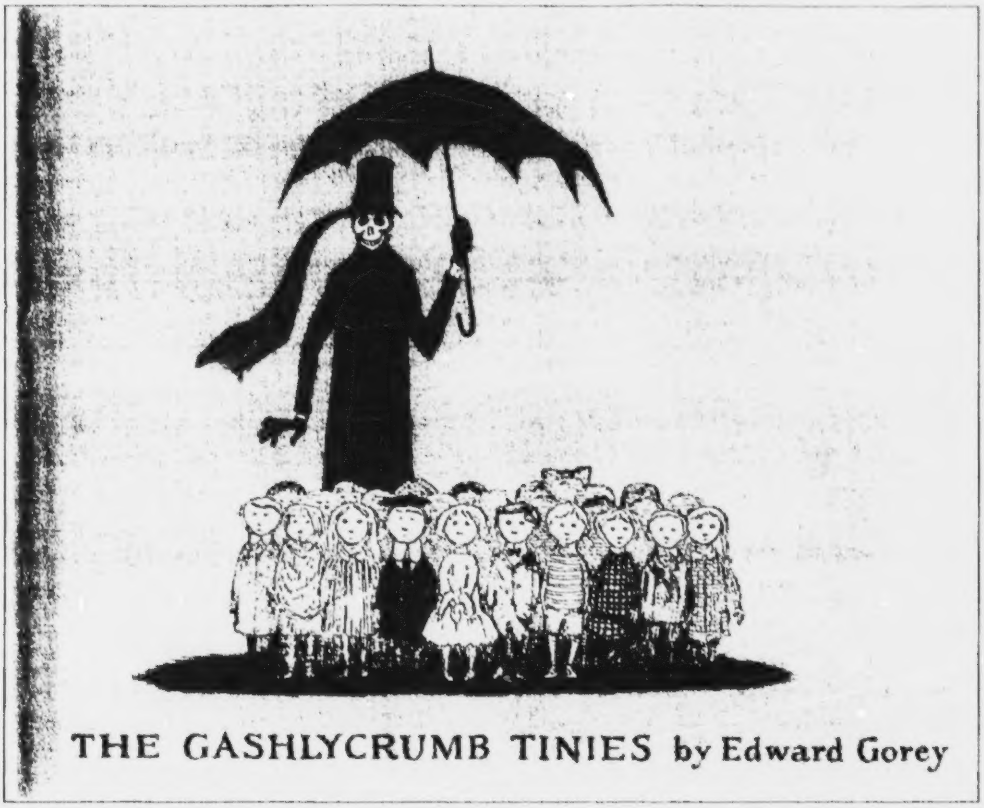
Three years later, in 1957, Gorey published *The Doubtful Guest*. The tale centers on an unidentifiable penguin-like creature attired in high-top sneakers and a flowing scarf (two of Gorey's favorite clothing items, in his art work and in real life). The creature descends mysteriously on a stiff, turn-of-the-century English family and becomes a permanent, unexplained guest: "It came 17 years ago — and to this day, It has shown no intention of going away." This was Gorey's first book that the publisher aimed specifically at children. (He said he intended most of his works for children, but publishers disagreed.) Yet, as reviewers pointed out, the oddball creature at the center of the story is like an unwanted child. And the story can be seen as a tongue-in-cheek warning against having children. As critics have noted, Gorey had turned expectations for children's stories on their heads.

In Gorey's subsequent works, gruesome fates befall characters, many of them young. *The Hapless Child* (1961) begins like a classic orphan's tale, in the tradition of *The Secret Garden* (1909) or *Sara Crewe* (1888). In those novels by the English author Frances Hodgson Burnett, brave orphans overcome hardships to achieve happy endings. But such happy endings didn't occur in Gorey's work. In *The Hapless Child*, Charlotte Sophia is orphaned, sold to a cruel drunk, and worked until she is blind. Instead of finding happiness, she is run down by her own father, who doesn't recognize her. He was "not dead after all," Gorey reveals drily. Many of his other works feature children facing similar ghastly fates. *The Beastly Baby* (1962) introduces a horrific infant who eventually explodes, and *The Wuggly Ump* (1963) includes the title creature, who doesn't befriend three young playmates — it devours them.

Similarly, readers' expectations (and funny bones) are shaken by what Gorey called his "anti-alphabet books." The most notorious of his ABC books is *The Gashlycrumb Tinies* (1962). In it, Gorey details the deaths of 26 children, in alphabetical order: "A is for Amy who fell down the stairs/B is for Basil assaulted by bears. . . . U is for Una who slipped down the drain/V is for Victor squashed under a train." Gorey said: "Nothing serious should be deduced about my attitude towards children from what I put them through. I don't know many children. And I don't know if I really remember what it was like being a child, or not. I use children a lot because they're so vulnerable." His other alphabet books, including *The Utter Zoo* (1967), *The Chinese Obelisks* (1970), and *The Glorious Nosebleed* (1974), also relate unusual subject matter in the A-Z format.

> *"Nothing serious should be deduced about my attitude towards children from what I put them through. I don't know many children. And I don't know if I really remember what it was like being a child, or not. I use children a lot because they're so vulnerable."*

Gorey followed *The Gashlycrumb Tinies* with more than 20 other titles in 10 years. He also continued to design book covers and to illustrate the work of other writers. Because his work was so unusual, conventional publishers often didn't retain Gorey for long. Eventually, he began to bring out some of his books under his own publishing imprint, the Fantod Press. ("A Victorian word," he said. "If you have the fantods you have the vapors, the nervous tizzies.") He also won the support of the Gotham Book Mart, a


THE GASHLYCRUMB TINIES by Edward Gorey

bookstore in New York City. Its owner published some of Gorey's books and championed all of his work. Over time, his small-format books became more and more popular with a limited but dedicated group of fans.

Reaching a Wider Audience

Gorey began to reach a wider audience in the 1970s with collaborations on mass-market books for children. He joined up with Peter Neumeyer for the successful *Why We Have Day and Night* (1970). He also wrote stories, illustrated by Victoria Chess, about a cat-and-doll team named Fletcher and Zenobia. In these stories, Gorey restrains his dark humor to create a reasonably conventional tale in which the cat comes out on top. (Not surprisingly from the number of cats that grace his books, Gorey was a passionate cat lover.) One of Gorey's most successful collaborations was with Florence Parry Heide. Their first joint effort, *The Shrinking of Treehorn* (1971), won several awards. Gorey's illustrations were considered an ideal match for Heide's story of an alienated family and child who can't get any attention.

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During the early 1970s, Gorey also extended his reach by publishing collections of his works. The first volume, *Amphigorey,* published in 1972, brought together 15 of his "small" books for grownups and children. In addition to selling well in the United States, it was a success in Europe, where it appeared in translated editions. *Amphigorey Too* followed in 1975 and *Amphigorey Also* in 1983.

A Passion for Ballet and Theater

In 1973, Gorey produced a children's book close to his own heart. *The Lavender Leotard; or, Going a Lot to the New York City Ballet* "introduces two small, distant, ageless, and wholly imaginary relatives to 50 seasons of the New York City Ballet." The fur-coat-clad narrator in the story is Gorey himself. The charming volume draws on his passion for the New York City Ballet under the direction of George Balanchine, a renowned choreographer. (A choreographer arranges the sequence and pattern of movement in a dance.) Gorey considered Balanchine "the greatest living genius in the arts." And he attended virtually every performance of every Balanchine ballet in New York City from 1957 until the choreographer's death in 1983—both afternoon and evening performances. "I began going to every performance, since that was easier than trying to decide which nine out of ten I was going to," he explained. "You just don't know when somebody is going to turn up with a performance you're never going to forget." Gorey became a fixture at the performances, dressed in a long fur coat, long scarf, and a pair of sneakers, like a character from his books. (A great animal lover, Gorey later gave up wearing fur and said it had been "insensitive" to wear it.)

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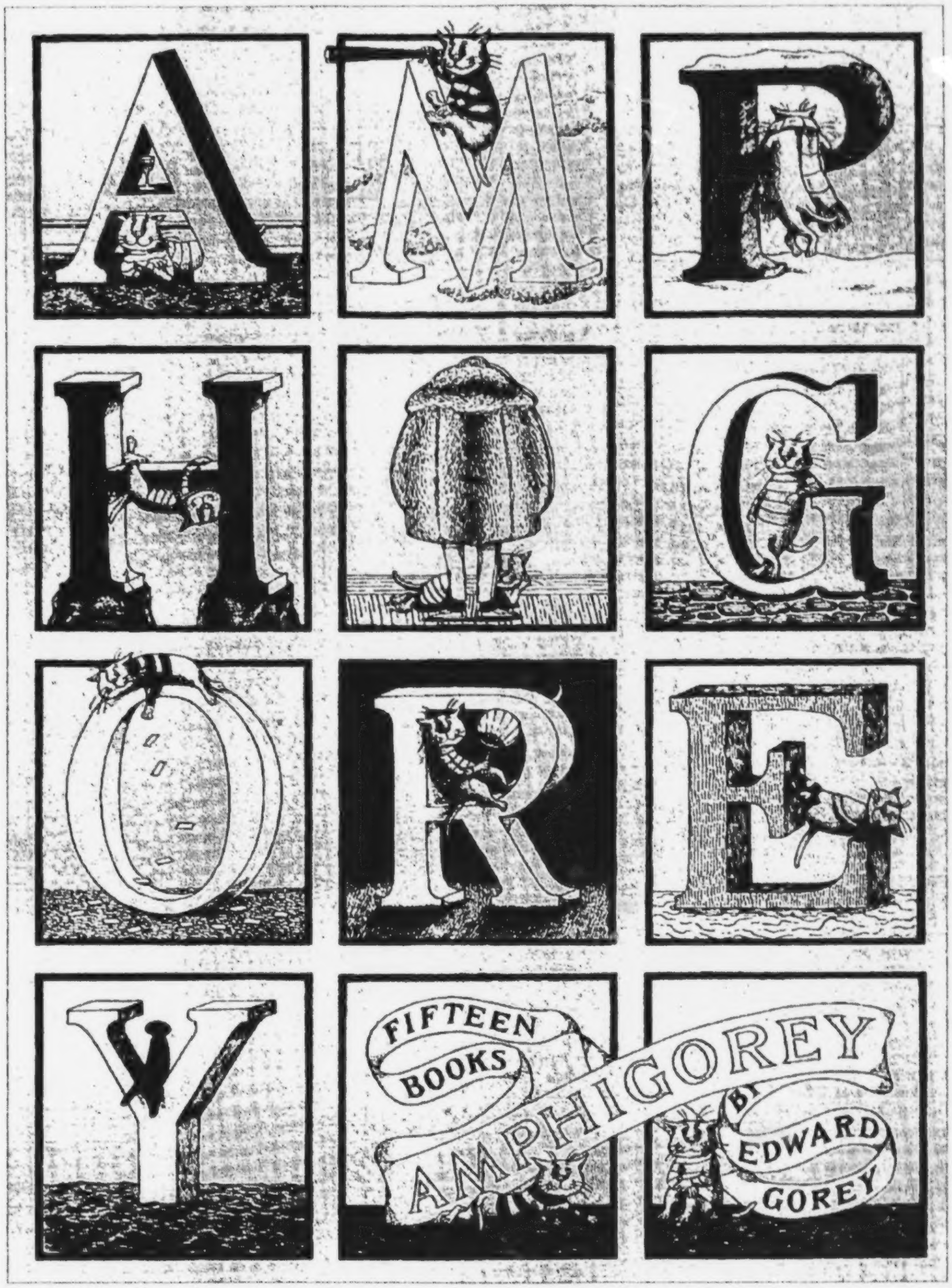
In the late 1970s Gorey got directly involved in ballet and returned to his early love, the theater. He designed sets for the all-male ballet troupe, Les Ballets Trocadero de Monte Carlo, and also for a small New York company.



In 1977, he took charge of costumes as well as sets for a major New York City production of *Dracula*, the famous vampire story. His costume designs earned him the highest award in American theater, the Antoinette Perry (or "Tony") Award. During the same period, Gorey's own works were adapted as a theatrical revue. He never expected to see his work on stage, he said.

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"I went with extreme reluctance, and I laughed about five minutes when I was appalled with my words coming out of people's mouths, but I loved it," Gorey said. "I thought my stuff worked very well on the stage, and practically anything could be turned into a revue."

In 1978, some of his works were presented in a lavish production in New York. But it closed after preview performances on its opening night. Undaunted, Gorey got involved with subsequent productions of his works—he worked on stage and set designs and adapted his writings for these theatrical productions. "I've never really liked my work once I've got done with it," he said. "I discovered this was a way of being able to enjoy it later." In the last ten years of his life, he created theatrical productions based on his unpublished works as well as published ones. At that time, Gorey was splitting his time between New York City and Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Working with local actors on Cape Cod, he wrote, directed, and even performed in these pieces, with great enjoyment. Some of them incorporated puppets that Gorey designed and made himself.

"What I'm really interested in is everyday life. It's dreadfully hazardous. I never could understand why people always feel they have to climb Mount Everest when you know it's quite dangerous getting out of bed."

Later Works

In 1982 Gorey abandoned his usual black-and-white drawings to create a full-color pop-up book, *The Dwindling Party*. Finely detailed and executed, the book relates the story of Neville, the son of the Victorian MacFizzer family. The lad cooly accepts his fate when the rest of his family is carried away, one by one, by a huge bat. The story-in-verse ends with Neville's matter-of-fact conclusion that these events were "all for the best." *The Tunnel Calamity* (1984) saw Gorey tackling an accordion-style-format book with no text. Peeking through an actual window in the book's cover, the reader views the Victorian characters as they are besieged by a mysterious, menacing creature. Around this time, millions of television viewers were introduced to Gorey's distinctive artwork: His animated drawings were chosen to introduce every episode of the popular "Mystery!" TV series on PBS, the Public Broadcasting Service.

In 1986, Gorey moved permanently to Cape Cod, Massachusetts. After that, his production of books slowed somewhat. His fans remained devoted

The cast from the Broadway play, Gorey Stories, *1978.*

to his work, however, and his renown continued to grow. A younger generation of readers got to know him through his illustrations for books by Joan Aiken, John Bellairs, and Hilaire Belloc. In 1998, fans were treated to *The Haunted Tea Cosy: A Dispirited and Distasteful Diversion for Christmas.* This "Gorey-ized" tale is a take-off of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, the 19th-century English novelist. Dickens describes Ebenezer Scrooge's change of heart after he meets the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future. In Gorey's version, a character named Edmund Gravel follows specters of Christmas That Never Was, That Isn't, and That Never Will Be, to great comic effect. Gorey revived Edward Gravel in 1999 in *The Headless Bust: A Melancholy Meditation on the False Millennium.* In this outing, Gravel and a six-legged Bahhumbug travel via an oversized insect to a mysterious small town. There, several strange events suggest what's to come in the new century. The book was Gorey's last. He died on April 15, 2000, following a heart attack.

While Gorey is often noted as a master of the ghastly, eerie, and uncanny, he never saw himself that way. He regarded his books as nonsense literature, in the tradition of Lewis Carroll's jabberwocky and Edward Lear's owl and pussycat. "What I'm really interested in is everyday life," he said. "It's dreadfully hazardous. I never could understand why people always feel they have to climb Mount Everest when you know it's quite dangerous getting out of bed."

His Writing Process

In creating his books, Gorey usually wrote the text of a book before he illustrated it. "A couple of times, I got carried away and started doing the drawings before the book was finished. Total catastrophe ensued," he said. "I think of myself primarily as a writer anyway, and the writing is what's holding the whole thing up."

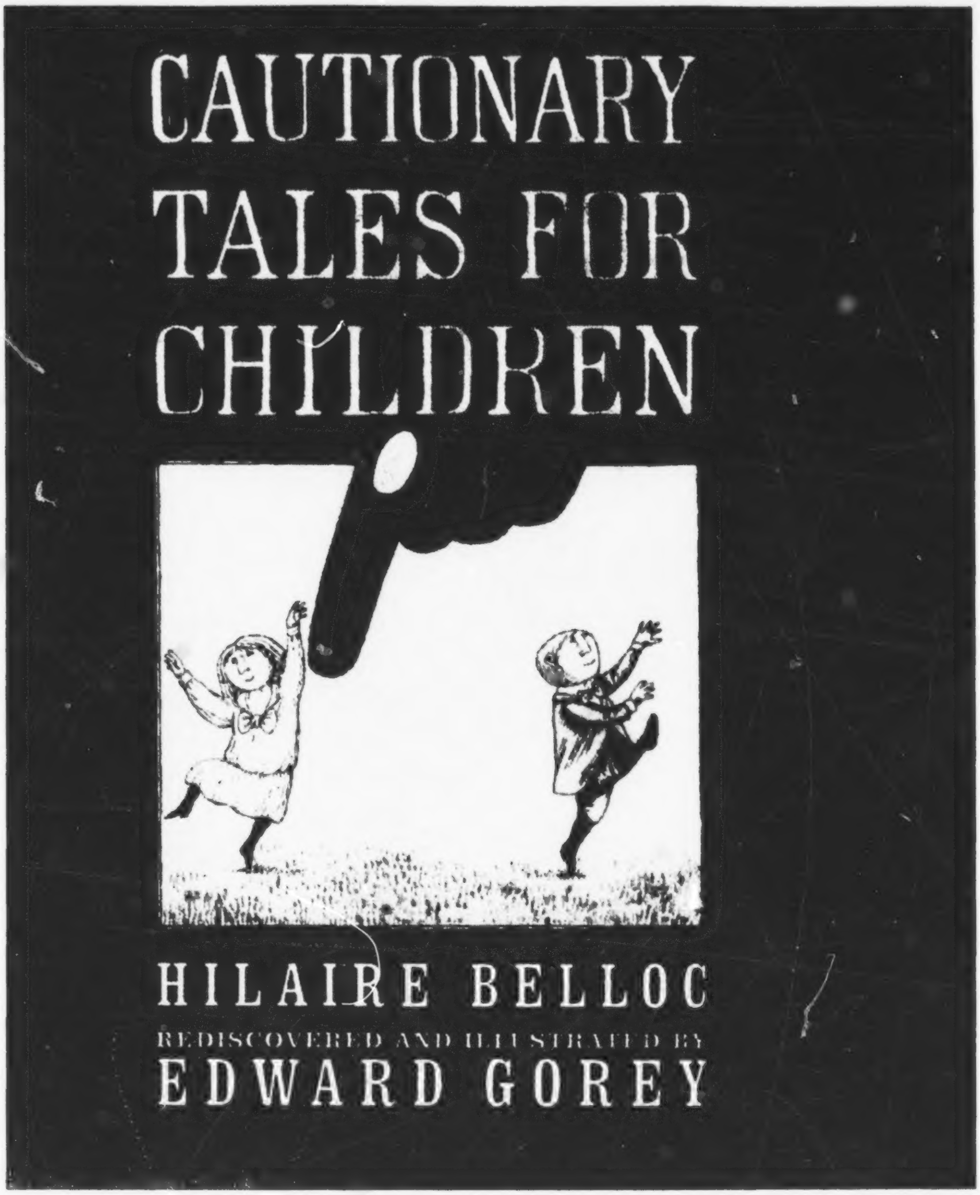
MAJOR INFLUENCES

Gorey drew his influences from many different sources. "God knows my influences are eclectic. There's hardly anything I haven't filched some time or another," he once said. "I will take equally from life, or from other artwork, or another book. Sometimes it's dance, sometimes it's movies, sometimes it's other books, sometimes it's pictures. It may be verbal; it may be visual. No matter how hard you try to [imitate something] of course, eventually you wander off on something completely different."

> *"The whole genre of 19th-century book illustration — steel and wood engravings — holds a fascination for me. I'd pore over these books and of course everyone in them was in period costume. I do think period costume is more interesting to draw."*

According to Gorey, he was particularly taken with English Victorian novels — their sometimes exaggerated melodrama and horrible, violent plot turns. As he once said, "I think of my books as Victorian novels all scrunched up." The illustrations of the same period were also very influential. "The whole genre of 19th-century book illustration — steel and wood engravings — holds a fascination for me," he said. "I'd pore over these books and of course everyone in them was in period costume. I do think period costume is more interesting to draw."

In contrast to the sprawling novels and detailed drawings of that period, Gorey also was keenly interested in the spare, concise literature and art of Japan and China. Artists of those countries depict an image with a few ex-


CAUTIONARY TALES FOR CHILDREN
HILAIRE BELLOC
REDISCOVERED AND ILLUSTRATED BY
EDWARD GOREY

pressive strokes of a brush. Their writers convey worlds in brief, simply told tales. "I like to work in [a similar] way, leaving things out, being very oblique in what you're saying, being very brief," Gorey said.

Gorey also loved silent films. "I really do believe that movies got worse once they started to talk," he said. "A lot of my books derive, in one way or another, from old movies." He has singled out Louis Feuillade, a French silent film director, as the most potent influence. "[His] films are cozy, with domestic settings, and they have sinister underpinnings," he said. "There's a

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German word which is the word for cozy but with the negative attached to it, so that it's cozy and sinister; settling and unsettling; cozy and uncozy." Gorey said. "I think there should be a little bit of uneasiness in everything, because I do think we're all really in a sense living on the edge. So much of life is inexplicable."

"There's a German word which is the word for cozy but with the negative attached to it, so that it's cozy and sinister; settling and unsettling; cozy and uncozy. I think there should be a little bit of uneasiness in everything, because I do think we're all really in a sense living on the edge. So much of life is inexplicable."

HOME AND FAMILY

Gorey lived in New York City until about 1963, when he began to divide his time between New York and Cape Cod, Massachusetts. (He always arrived in New York just before the New York City Ballet season began, and left just after it ended.) In 1986, he moved to the Cape full time. Whether in his one-room apartment in New York City or in his rambling houses on Cape Cod, Gorey shared his space with at least four cats. He adored them, even when they hulked on his shoulders or knocked the ink bottle over a just-completed drawing. He identified with the cats' sense of mystery. "I look like a real person, But underneath I am not real at all. It's just a fake persona," he said. "That's why cats are so wonderful. They can't talk. They have these mysterious lives that are only half-connected to you. We have no idea what goes on in their tiny little minds."

For many years, Gorey lived in a Cape Cod house that belonged to his aunt and cousins, who moved in during the summer. Gorey served as the family's chauffeur and cook. "I can cook almost anything, however complicated, as long as it doesn't have to look pretty when it's over with," he said. Later, he got his own 200-year-old farmhouse, which he claimed was haunted. Visiting book stores and yard sales nearly every day, he soon filled it to overflowing with pets, countless piles of dusty books, collections of rocks, cheese-graters and doorknobs, and endless other treasures. Locals in the town of Yarmouthport knew him as "just the regular guy with cat hair on his sweater," said the cook at his favorite restaurant. Indeed, Gorey was not the anti-social hermit that many fans imagined. "There was this false idea that he was a brooding, melancholic man," said his friend Andreas Brown, owner of the Gotham Book Mart. "He was not a recluse. He was jovial and effervescent, and he loved to laugh." After his death by heart attack in 2000, his family and friends opened his house as a museum (see web site below). Part of its mission is to further the work of Gorey's favorite cause, animal welfare. He left most of his estate to animal-related charities.

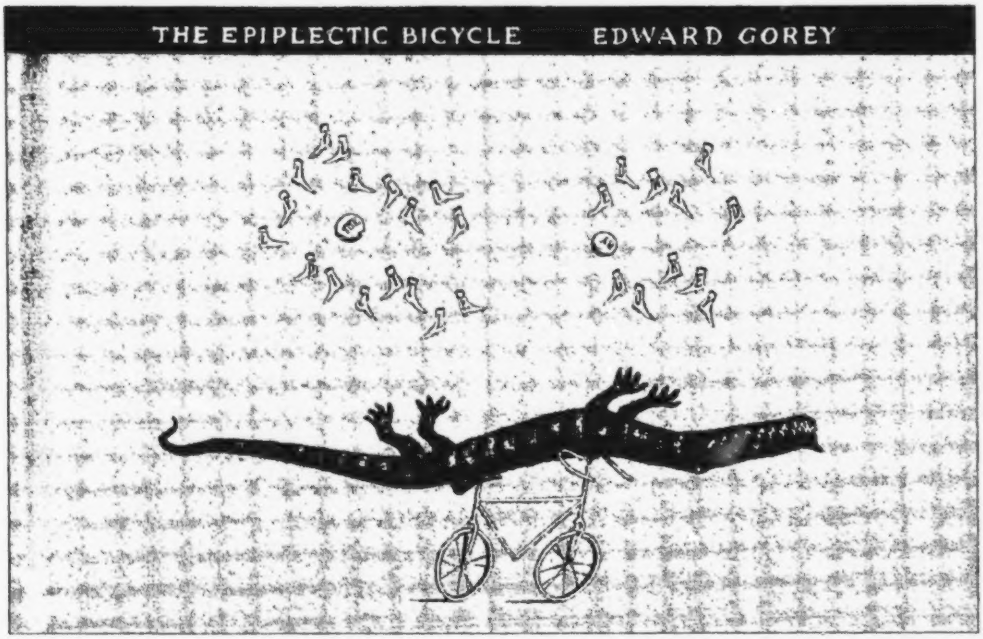
HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Gorey was known for his massive appetite for—and appreciation for—all sorts of culture, from ballet to soap operas. He speed-read books, reading and re-reading all the books by a particular novelist. Then he would move on to a thorough study of subjects ranging from Japanese art to psychology. His devotion to the New York City ballet was legendary. For about 25 years he attended virtually every performance, day and evening. He also called himself "a real movie nut. There were periods when I must have seen a thousand movies a year," he said. He preferred old, silent films to modern ones. But he continued to see current movies, including all the "Friday the 13th" and "Nightmare on Elm Street" films. He was a TV buff who followed General Hospital and other afternoon soaps for stretches. In later years he became an enthusiastic fan of "The X-Files" and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." He collected books, postcards, rocks, and many other objects—but not in a systematic fashion, as he pointed out. He also enjoyed designing and sewing toy stuffed animals, including such creatures as his own made-up "figbash." In response to a request from ballerina Allegra Kent, Gorey once sent a handsewn creature. His brief reply was perfectly embroidered—in typical stylized Gorey letters—on its back.

SELECTED WORKS

As Author and Illustrator

The Unstrung Harp; or, Mr. Earbrass Writes a Novel, 1953
The Listing Attic, 1954
The Doubtful Guest, 1957
The Object Lesson, 1958
The Bug Book, 1960
The Fatal Lozenge, 1960
The Hapless Child, 1961
The Curious Sofa, 1961 (under pseudonym Ogdred Weary)
The Beastly Baby, 1962 (under pseudonym Ogdred Weary)
The Willowdale Handcar; or, The Return of the Black Doll, 1962
The Gashlycrumb Tinies, 1962
The Wuggly Ump, 1963
15 Two; or, The Nursery Frieze, 1964



The Gilded Bat, 1962
The Pious Infant, 1966 (under pseudonym Mrs. Regera Dowdy)
The Utter Zoo Alphabet, 1967
The Epiplectic (sic) *Bicycle*, 1968
Why We Have Day and Night, 1970 (with Peter F. Neumeyer)
The Osbick Bird, 1970
The Chinese Obelisks, 1970
The Awdrey-Gore Legacy, 1972
Amphigorey, 1972
The Lavender Leotard; or, Going a Lot to the New York City Ballet, 1973
The Glorious Nosebleed, 1974
Amphigorey Too, 1975
L'heure Bleue, 1975
The Loathsome Couple, 1977
Dracula, A Toy Theatre, 1979
The Dwindling Party, 1982
Amphigorey Also, 1983
The Tunnel Calamity, 1984
The Raging Tide, or, The Black Doll's Imbroglio, 1987
The Fraught Settee, 1990
The Haunted Tea Cosy: A Dispirited and Distasteful Diversion for Christmas, 1998
The Headless Bust: A Melancholy Meditation on the False Millennium, 1999

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As Author

Fletcher and Zenobia, 1967 (illustrated by Victoria Chess)
Fletcher and Zenobia Save the Circus, 1971 (illustrated by Victoria Chess)

As Illustrator

The Monster Dens, or, Look What Happened at My House and to It, 1966 (by John Ciardi)
Donald and the. . ., 1968 (by Peter F. Neumeyer)
The Jumblies, 1969 (by Edward Lear)
Dong with the Luminous Nose, 1969 (by Edward Lear)
Donald Has a Difficulty, 1970 (by Peter F. Neumeyer)
The Shrinking of Treehorn, 1971 (by Florence Parry Heide)
Treehorn's Treasure, 1981 (by Florence Parry Heide)
Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats, 1982 (by T.S. Eliot)
The Wolves of Willoughby Chase, 1987 (by Joan Aiken)
The Mansion in the Mist, 1992 (by John Bellairs)
The House with a Clock in Its Walls, 1993 (by John Bellairs)
Cautionary Tales for Children, 2002 (by Hilaire Belloc)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Best Illustrated Book of the Year (*New York Times*): 1966, for *The Monster Dens, or, Look What Happened at My House and to It*, by John Ciardi, illustrated by Gorey; 1969, for *Dong with the Luminous Nose*, by Edward Lear, illustrated by Gorey; 1971, for *The Shrinking of Treehorn*, by Florence Parry Heide, illustrated by Gorey
Notable Book Citation (American Library Association): 1971, for *The Shrinking of Treehorn*, by Florence Parry Heide, illustrated by Gorey
Best Graphics for Children (Bologna Children's Book Fair): 1977, for *The Shrinking of Treehorn*, by Florence Parry Heide, illustrated by Gorey
Antoinette Perry "Tony" Awards: 1978, for *Dracula*, for Best Costumes for a Broadway Play
Parents' Choice Award for Illustration (Parents' Choice Foundation): 1982, for *The Dwindling Party*

FURTHER READING

Books

Authors and Artists for Young Adults, Vol. 40, 2001
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Something About the Author, Vol. 29, 1982; Vol. 70, 1993
St. James Guide to Children's Writers, 1999
Wilkin, Karen, ed. *Ascending Peculiarity: Edward Gorey on Edward Gorey*, 2001

Periodicals

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Christian Science Monitor, Oct. 31, 1996, p.10
Current Biography Yearbook, 1976
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Los Angeles Times, Apr. 18, 2000, Metro section, p.B6
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WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

http://www.edwardgoreyhouse.org
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/mystery/gorey.html

Francisco Jiménez 1943-

Mexican-Born American Writer, Educator, Scholar, and Academic Administrator
Author of *The Circuit* and *Breaking Through*
Winner of the 2002 U.S. Professor of the Year Award

BIRTH

Francisco Jiménez was born on June 29, 1943, in San Pedro, Tlaquepaque, Mexico. He was the second of nine children born to Francisco and Maria (Hernandez) Gonzalez Jiménez, who worked as farm laborers.

YOUTH

Jiménez spent the first four years of his life in El Rancho Blanco, a poor village north of Guadalajara, Mexico. When Francisco was four, his father decided to take the family to California, where he hoped to provide a better life for his wife and children. But Jiménez's father was the only family member who had a "green card"—legal permission to enter and work in the United States. This meant that the family would have to sneak into the United States as illegal immigrants. If any other members of the family were arrested by the U.S. Border Patrol, they would be deported back to Mexico. Years later, Jiménez praised his parents' bravery in leaving their familiar surroundings in Mexico for the unknown world of the United States. "It takes a tremendous amount of courage to cross the border without knowing the language or culture, in order to improve their lives," he declared. "If that isn't the American spirit, I don't know what is."

The journey to California was a great adventure for young Francisco. "I remember how excited I was making the trip on a second-class train traveling north from Guadalajara," he said. "We traveled for two days and nights. When we arrived at the United States-Mexico border, Papa told us that we had to cross the barbed-wire fence without being seen by *la migra,* the immigration officers dressed in green uniforms. During the night we dug a hole underneath the wire wall and wiggled like snakes under it to the other side. . . . We were picked up by a woman whom Papa had contacted in Mexicali. She drove us, for a fee, to a tent labor camp on the outskirts of Guadalupe, a small town on the coast. From that day on, for the next ten years, while we traveled from place to place throughout California, following the crops and living in migrant labor camps, I feared being caught by the Border Patrol."

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The Jiménez family was happy to be in the United States. But they were poor and uneducated, so their job options were very limited. Like many other Mexican people who entered the United States illegally, the Jiménez family found work as farm laborers. Each year, the family followed an annual "circuit" of California farm operations that used migrant laborers to plant and pick crops. In late spring and summer, the Jiménez family picked strawberries in Santa Maria. In September they picked grapes in Fresno. In the early winter, they picked cotton in Corcoran and Bakersfield. And then in February they returned to Santa Maria to tend the lettuce and carrot crops and prepare the strawberry fields for planting.

Migrant farm workers received very little money for their efforts, despite the long hours of physical labor they endured. As a result, the Jiménez family remained unable to afford a nice house or clothing. In addition, following "the circuit" meant that they never stayed in one place for long. As a result, young Francisco and the other children in his growing family were not able to attend school regularly, and they were unable to establish lasting friendships with other children. But Francisco and his siblings persevered, in part because of his mother's positive outlook on life. "No matter how bad things were, she always had hope," he remembered. "She would always say, 'God will provide. Things are going to get better.' I come from a family that is strong in terms of faith."

> *"... We were picked up by a woman whom Papa had contacted in Mexicali. She drove us, for a fee, to a tent labor camp on the outskirts of Guadalupe, a small town on the coast. From that day on, for the next ten years, while we traveled from place to place throughout California, following the crops and living in migrant labor camps, I feared being caught by the Border Patrol."*

EDUCATION

For young Francisco Jiménez, the best part of living in California was that it gave him the opportunity to go to school. "I came to realize that learning and knowledge were the only stable things in my life," he explained. "Whatever I learned in school, that knowledge would stay with me no matter how many times we moved."

But school was not easy for Jiménez, especially during his first years in America. Since he had grown up in a Spanish-speaking household, he did not understand English when he first began attending classes. In addition, his family's nomadic lifestyle continually interrupted his schooling. Indeed, he and his older brother Roberto missed months of school every year to help their parents work in the fields. As a result, Jiménez always seemed to be the new boy in every school he attended, and he was always struggling to catch up with the teacher's lesson plans. This difficult situation was made even worse by some white classmates who bullied him and called him racist names because of his Mexican heritage. "They made fun of my thick accent and whenever I made grammatical mistakes," he added. "That really hurt. I withdrew and became quiet."

> *"School was a lot nicer than home. Many times, we lived in tents with dirt floors, no electricity or plumbing. In school we had electricity, plumbing, lighting. We even had toys."*

Despite these unpleasant experiences, though, Jiménez enjoyed learning about various subjects, and he loved spending his days in a warm and clean environment. "School was a lot nicer than home," he admitted. "Many times, we lived in tents with dirt floors, no electricity or plumbing. In school we had electricity, plumbing, lighting. We even had toys."

Jiménez's passion for learning was so great that he even made little homework assignments for himself. For example, he often spent his work breaks out in the field memorizing English words that he jotted down on a small note pad. He also read any books that he could get his hands on. When his family went to public dumps to collect discarded clothes or furniture for their own use, Jiménez would seek out books that had been tossed in the trash.

In the late 1950s, Jiménez's father experienced back pain caused by years of hard physical labor, and it became impossible for him to continue working in the fields. His back problems pushed the family even deeper into poverty. But it also convinced his parents to settle down year-round in the town of Santa Maria, California. Jiménez enrolled at El Camino Junior High School. He was delighted at the opportunity to stay in the same school for an entire year.

Immigration Problems

A few months later, U.S. immigration officers arrived at El Camino Junior High School and arrested Jiménez for being an illegal alien — a foreign citizen who lives in the United States illegally. They also took his brother Roberto into custody. (Younger siblings who had been born in the United States automatically became U.S. citizens, so they did not have to worry about being sent back to Mexico.)

When it became clear that the U.S. government intended to deport Francisco and Roberto back to Mexico, their parents decided to take the whole family back. But when the family reached Mexico, Jiménez's parents immediately applied for legal papers that would allow Francisco and Roberto to return to the United States legally. Their request was granted, paving the way for Francisco and his brother to return to California.

Francisco and Roberto were excited about the prospect of returning to Santa Maria. But they returned to California alone. The rest of the family stayed in Mexico, where their father wanted to get medical treatment for his back. Upon arriving in Santa Maria, the two boys supported themselves by working as farm laborers and janitors. Some time later, the rest of the Jiménez clan returned to Santa Maria as well, sparking a joyful reunion.

Crediting Teachers for Success

Jiménez believes that he owes much of success as an author, teacher, and administrator to some of his early teachers. "I have the highest respect for teachers," he said. "For me, I found hope in school, from some of the teachers . . . who were very sensitive and caring. The success of the child and young adult depends as much on the caring and loving people who help the child break through as it does on the child's own hard work, hope, and intelligence."

Jiménez credits a sixth-grade teacher named Mr. Lema with giving him a big boost in his study of English and other subjects. He recalls that Mr. Lema often spent his lunch hour helping him with his lessons. Another positive influence was Miss Audrey Bell, his English teacher during his sophomore year in high school. "From her I learned to appreciate literature and the art of writing," he said. "She regularly assigned our class to write narrative accounts of personal experience. Even though I had difficulty expressing myself, I enjoyed writing about my migrant childhood. On one such essay, Miss Bell commented that the experiences I wrote about were very moving, and that my writing showed promise. She then had me read *The Grapes of Wrath* [a novel by John Steinbeck about migratory farm workers in California during the Great Depression, a period of extreme poverty in the United States]. It was difficult for me, but I could not put the novel down. It was one of the first literary works to which I could relate. The more I read it, the more I appreciated the power of language to move hearts and minds."

Jiménez's academic performance soared once his family stopped following the "circuit." Moreover, staying in one school system enabled him to establish friendships with other students for the first time. By the time he graduated from Santa Maria High School in 1961, he was president of his class and the proud owner of a 3.7 grade point average (GPA).

> *"Through my writing I hope to give readers insight into the lives of migrant farm worker families and their children, whose backbreaking labor picking fruits and vegetables puts food on our tables. Their courage, their hopes and dreams for a better life for their children and their children's children, give meaning to the 'American dream.' Their story is the American story."*

"After graduating from Santa Maria High School, I received several scholarships to attend Santa Clara University, where I quickly discovered that my migrant experiences were both an obstacle and a blessing," Jiménez recalled. "They were an obstacle to the extent that I did not have the social, economic, and educational privileges most of my classmates enjoyed. However, they were a blessing because they served as a constant reminder of how fortunate I was to be in college. Those past experiences convinced me that I should do everything within my power to forge ahead in my studies and not give up."

In 1965 Jiménez formally became a citizen of the United States. One year later, he graduated from Santa Clara University with a bachelor's degree (B.A.) in Spanish. He then left California to continue his schooling at Columbia University in New York City. He earned a master's degree (M.A.) in 1969 and a doctorate degree (Ph.D.) in 1972 in Spanish and Latin American literature.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

More than four decades after Jiménez traveled the backroads of California as a young migrant farm worker, he tapped into his memories of those days to write several critically acclaimed novels for young people. These works—*The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child, La Mariposa*

(*"The Butterfly"*), *The Christmas Gift,* and *Breaking Through* — have been hailed for their powerful descriptions of the experiences and dreams of migrant farm families. In the intervening 40 years between his youth and his authorship of these works, meanwhile, Jiménez became one of California's most respected scholars and school administrators.

Building a Rewarding Career as an Educator

During and after his student years, Jiménez continued to explore his interest in writing. In 1973 he cofounded the *Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingue,* a periodical devoted to studying Mexican-American literature. In the early 1970s, he also published a few short stories based on his migrant childhood. One of these stories — "Cajas de carton" ("Cardboard Boxes") — was originally published in a New York-based Spanish-language literary magazine. Within a few months, an English translation of the story was published in the *Arizona Quarterly* under the title "The Circuit." More than a quarter-century later, this work became the centerpiece of Jiménez's later autobiographical work *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child.*

But during the early part of his career, Jiménez little time on creating writing; instead, he devoted most of his time to teaching and scholarly writing. From 1971 to 1973 he taught Spanish at Columbia. He then accepted a faculty position back in California at Santa Clara University, where he had earned his bachelor's degree more than a decade earlier. He began his time at Santa Clara as an assistant professor, but by 1981 he was director of the school's division of arts and humanities. He continued to take on new responsibilities in subsequent years, and by the late 1990s he was one of the university's best-known administrators. In addition to directing and overseeing Santa Clara's programs in women's studies, ethnic studies, honors studies, and the Center for Applied Ethics, he also was charged with administering a million-dollar Irvine Foundation grant to improve the university's ethnic and racial diversity.

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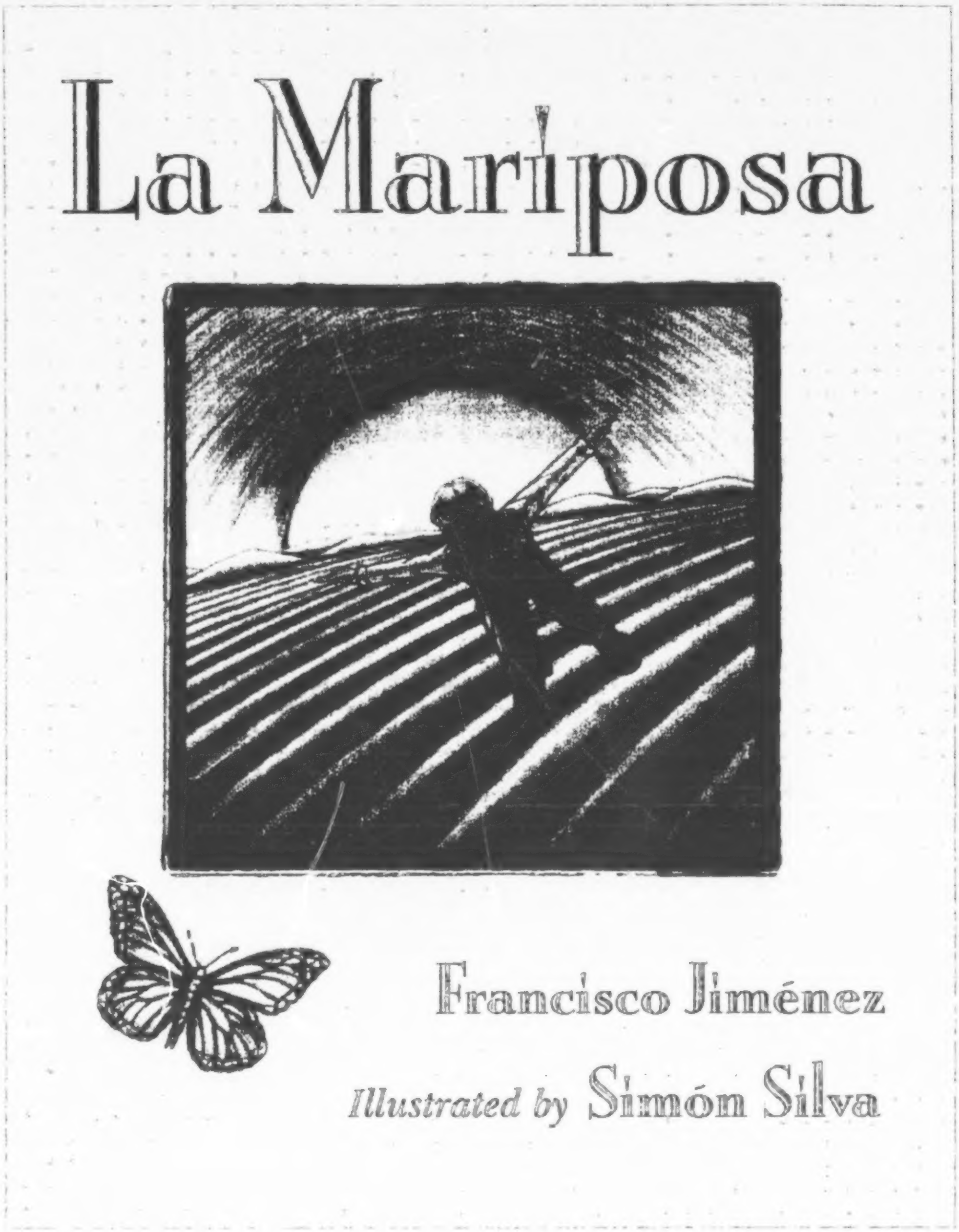
Jiménez built a strong reputation for integrity and thoughtfulness outside Santa Clara University as well. In 1976 he received an appointment to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, a board that works to ensure that the state's teachers are qualified to provide students with a good education. Jiménez eventually served two terms as the commission's chairman. In 1986 the California legislature passed a special resolution congratulating him on ten years of outstanding leadership as a member of the commission. One year later, he was named to the California Council for the Humanities. As an affiliate of the prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities, the California Council bestows financial grants for projects in history, art, language, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities. In addition, Jiménez wrote or edited a number of respected studies on Hispanic literature and social issues during the 1970s and 1980s.

Writing *The Circuit*

Jiménez enjoyed his many scholarly and administrative responsibilities. But he also felt a strong desire to write about his migrant childhood. In 1994 Jiménez asked Santa Clara for a one-year sabbatical (a paid leave of absence) from his teaching and administrative duties so that he could work on his autobiographical writing. When his sabbatical request was approved, he devoted the next year to researching and writing *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child,* a collection of 12 stories based on his days as a young migrant farm worker.

"In writing these stories, I relied heavily on my childhood recollections, but I also did a lot of background research," Jiménez said. He interviewed family members and studied family photographs from the time of his childhood. He even listened to the Mexican ballads that he had listened to as a child. Finally, he visited the many towns where his family had lived in the 1940s and 1950s. "I visited museums in those towns, and read through newspapers from that era," he explained. "Unfortunately, I found little or no information or documentation in those sources about migrant farm workers. I was disappointed, but more convinced than ever that I should write this book. As I gathered material, I began to recall other experiences I had forgotten. Looking back at those childhood memories from an adult point of view, I made a series of discoveries about myself in relation to my family, my community, and our society, gaining a deeper sense of purpose as an educator and as a writer."

Looking back on the creation of *The Circuit,* Jiménez claimed that his "greatest challenge was to write about my childhood experiences from the point of view of the child, and to make them accessible to both children



La Mariposa

Francisco Jiménez

Illustrated by Simón Silva

and adults. I wanted readers to hear the child's voice, to see through his eyes, and to feel through his heart." But he also wanted his stories to reflect accurately the history of his family and other migrant families. "Through my writing I hope to give readers insight into the lives of migrant farm worker families and their children, whose backbreaking labor picking fruits and vegetables puts food on our tables. Their courage, their hopes and

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dreams for a better life for their children and their children's children, give meaning to the 'American dream.' Their story is the American story."

The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child was published in 1997. Immediately after its release, several critics offered high praise for its simple but powerful narrative and its historical value. *Booklist* claimed that "like Steinbeck's classic *Grapes of Wrath,* Jiménez's stories combine stark social realism and heartrending personal drama." The book also received numerous awards, including the prestigious *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Award for children's fiction in 1998. According to the writer for *Horn Book* magazine, the recognition was well-deserved. "Its distinction lies in the fact that it is *both* a children's and an adult book," the reviewer said about *The Circuit*. "Jiménez's 12 stories . . . have a transparency that speaks to the adult's desire for spare, clean writing and the young reader's need for immediacy. . . . [The adult reader is likely to feel] a healthy amount of anger at the conditions endured by farm workers. Children, though, will go from field to field with Francisco, hearing his stories as if from a friend. Both audiences will be enriched."

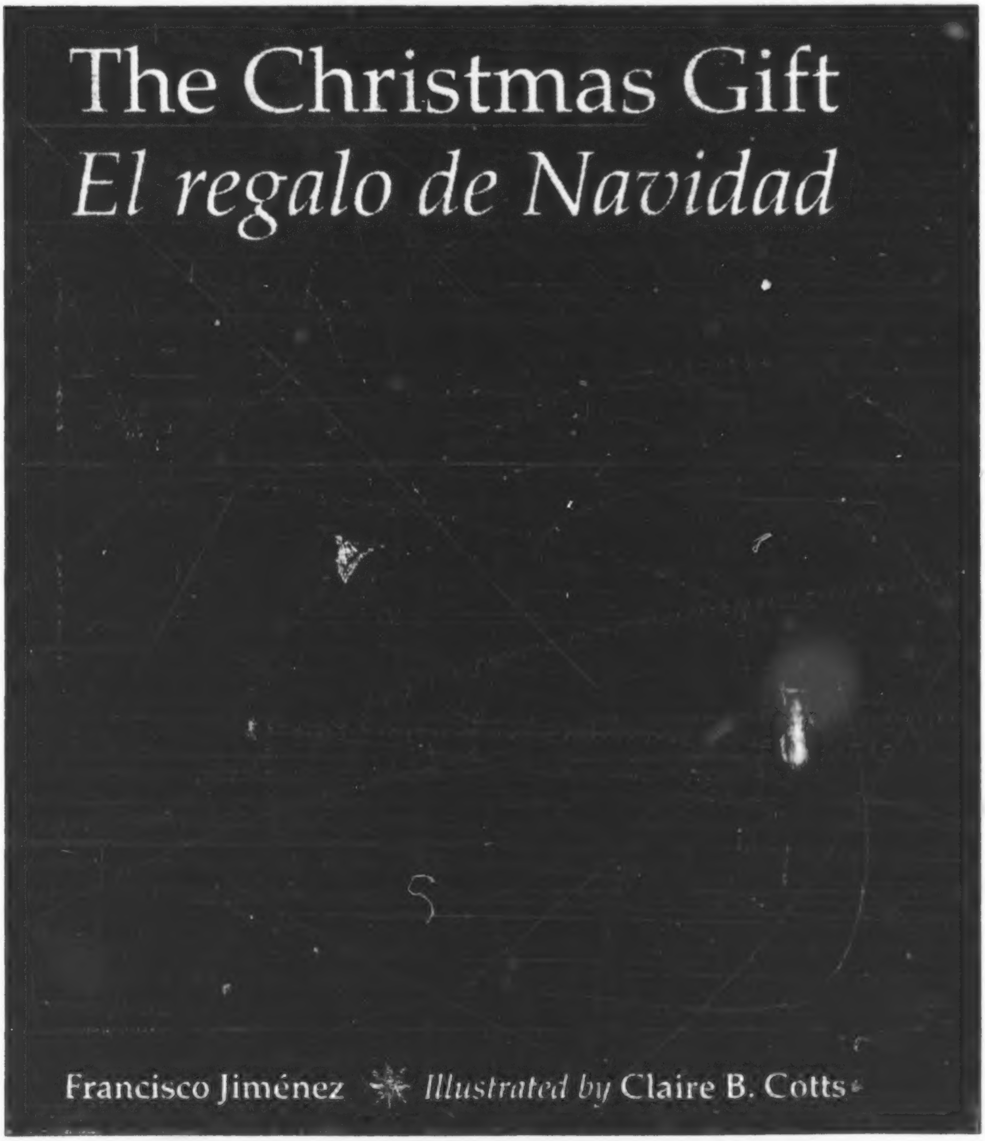
> *"Children of migrant parents or grandparents thank me for writing about their family's experiences. 'Your story is the story of our family,' they say. Others who have not gone through the migrant experience comment that my work has given them a deeper appreciation for and understanding of the plight of farm workers. I am grateful that readers have such a positive reaction."*

Other Works

Delighted by the warm response to *The Circuit,* Jiménez decided to write another children's book based on his past. In 1998 he published *La Mariposa* ("The Butterfly"), a picture book about a young Mexican migrant worker. As the story unfolds, the boy becomes so frustrated trying to learn English that he daydreams about flying away from his first-grade class like a butterfly to his father, who is toiling in nearby fields. Reviewers praised this effort as well. In *School Library Journal,* for example, one review stated that "the strength of the book lies in its ability to capture the frustration and isolation experienced by children who do not speak the dominant language." But some reviewers felt that the book was not as strong as *The*

Circuit. "Although heartfelt and touching, this largely autobiographical story . . . has several big problems, especially its picture-book format," claimed *Booklist*. The reviewer went on to complain that the story was too long for a picture-book audience and that the author never explained that the title of the story is the Spanish word for "butterfly."

In 2000 Jiménez adapted another one of his stories from *The Circuit* for a younger audience. *The Christmas Gift (El regalo de Navidad)* is set in the migrant farm worker camps of California in the early 1950s. It tells the story of a young Mexican boy named Panchito and his family's efforts to cele-



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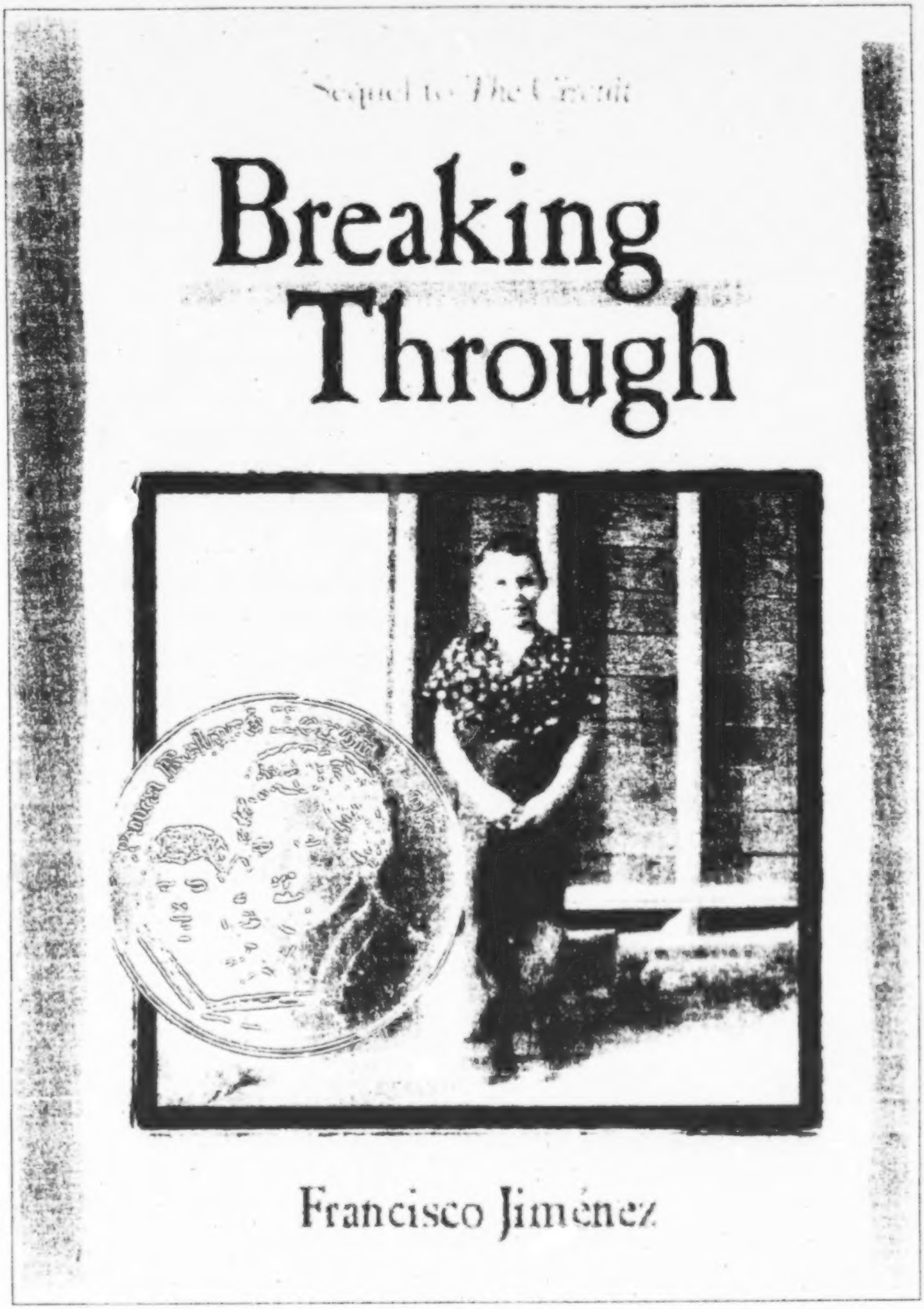
brate Christmas despite their poverty. *School Library Journal* called the tale "a touching holiday offering with an emphasis on family love and sharing."

Breaking Through

Encouraged by the acceptance of his accounts of migrant farm life, Jiménez continued to mine his childhood experiences for story ideas. In 2001 he published *Breaking Through,* considered a sequel to *The Circuit.* This young adult (YA) novel follows the migrant farm boy Panchito, who struggles to break free of the "circuit" of migrant farmwork and forge a better life for himself. But his efforts are complicated by his father, a proud but bitter man who insists on obedience from his son.

> "[Breaking Through] *is all about family, work, faith, caring, love, honesty, and that elusive word Mexicans use that says it all: respeto," wrote Allen Figueroa Deck in* America. *"Respeto is translated as 'respect,' but it is more than that. It has to do with right relations. . . . Francisco Jiménez's account is profoundly human, ordinary and yet enchanted. It speaks of the spark of goodness in all human beings. As such,* Breaking Through *is a hopeful, stirring, and unforgettable story."*

As with Jiménez's earlier works for young people, *Breaking Through* was warmly received. A writer for *School Library Journal* remarked that "the clash of cultures between teen insolence [being disrespectful] in the U.S. and Mexican respect for elders' authority is vividly portrayed, as is the injustice and casual bigotry often endured by young and old. . . . Jiménez ably helps readers see the world of 1950s and 1960s California through adolescent eyes." Reviewer Allen Figueroa Deck was even more complimentary in his article for *America.* "In this deceptively simple book Francisco [Jiménez] captures the earliest patterns of meaning and motive that subliminally shape a lifetime," Deck wrote. "It is all about family, work, faith, caring, love, honesty, and that elusive word Mexicans use that says it all: respeto. Respeto is translated as 'respect,' but it is more than that. It has to do with right relations. . . . Francisco Jiménez's account is profoundly human, ordinary and yet enchanted. It speaks of the spark of goodness in all human beings. As such, *Breaking Through* is a hopeful, stirring, and unforgettable story."



In 2002, *Breaking Through* was named an Honor Book, or runner-up, for the Pura Belpré Award. This award is given out biennially by the American Library Association. It's presented to a Latino or Latina writer or illustrator

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whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. It's an important award for such a new writer.

Jiménez is grateful that his stories have sparked an emotional response from readers. "Children of migrant parents or grandparents thank me for writing about their family's experiences," he said. "'Your story is the story of our family,' they say. Others who have not gone through the migrant experience comment that my work has given them a deeper appreciation for and understanding of the plight of farm workers. I am grateful that readers have such a positive reaction." Indeed, he says that he has received many appreciative letters from readers ranging from sixth-graders to college students. "Some of the letters I get from children indicate [that after reading my books] they are much more appreciative of what they have. This is from a sixth-grader: 'It made me take a second glance at my life and how lucky I am. It made me feel spoiled. It made me feel the need to jump out of my seat and to make a difference.'"

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Jiménez received a different type of honor in 2002: he was given the U.S. Professor of the Year Award. This award, which is given out by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, selects four college and university professors as winners for their dedication to teaching, commitment to students, and creative approach to education. This is the only national honor for excellent teaching in higher education. Jiménez was named Outstanding Master's University and College Professor. U.S. Representative to Congress Michael Honda acclaimed his achievement like this: "Professor Jiménez was given the award because of his outstanding teaching. He tailors his lessons to his students' backgrounds and works with them one on one. He tries to instill in each of them a global consciousness and an understanding of the human condition. Moreover, he believes it is important to bridge the gap between the university and society. To achieve this, he visits communities of migrant farm workers to talk to them about education. As a leader of the Hispanic community and an advocate of human rights, he is concerned with the current anti-immigration backlash, particularly efforts to deny education to the children of undocumented immigrants. . . . He has dedicated his life to others and his achievements reflect his dedication."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Jiménez married Laura Catherine Facchini, an administrator for Santa Clara University's academic support and internship program, in 1968. They have three sons, Francisco Andres, Miguel Antonio, and Tomas Roberto. They live in Santa Clara.

SELECTED WRITINGS

Books for Young Readers

The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child, 1997
La Mariposa ("The Butterfly"), 1998
Cajas de Carton (Spanish translation of *The Circuit*), 2000
The Christmas Gift (El regalo de Navidad), 2000
Breaking Through, 2001

Scholarly Works

Viva la lengua! A Contemporary Reader ("Love Live Language"), 1975 (with Gary D. Keller)
Spanish Here and Now, 1978 (with Gary D. Keller and Nancy A. Sebastiani)
Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature, 1978 (editor)
Hispanics in the United States: An Anthology of Creative Literature, 2 volumes, 1980, 1982 (edited with Gary D. Keller)
Mosaico de la vida: Prosa chicana, cubana, y puertorriquena ("Mosaic of Life: Chicano, Cuban, and Puerto Rican Prose"), 1981
Poverty and Social Justice, 1987

Jiménez has also contributed short stories, articles, and reviews to numerous periodicals and anthologies.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Annual Award (*Arizona Quarterly*): 1973, for the short story "The Circuit"
Distinguished Leadership in Education Award (California Teachers Association): 1979

Outstanding Young Man of America (U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce): 1980
Americas Award: 1997, for *The Circuit*
Professor Cedric Busette Memorial Award (Santa Clara University): 1998
Boston Globe-Horn Book Award: 1998, for *The Circuit*
Smithsonian Notable Book for Children (Smithsonian Institution): 1998, for *La Mariposa*; 1999, for *The Circuit*
Parents' Choice Recommended Award: 1999, for *La Mariposa*
Book for the Teen-Age (New York Public Library): 1999, for *The Circuit*
Plate of Bounty (U.S. State Department of Education): 1999
Cuffie Award (*Publishers Weekly*): 2001, for *The Christmas Gift*, for Best Treatment of a Social Issue
Americas Award (Consortium for Latin American Studies Programs): 2002, for *Breaking Through*
U.S. Professor of the Year Award (Council for Advancement and Support of Education and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching): 2002, Outstanding Master's University and College Professor

FURTHER READING

Books

Authors and Artists for Young Adults, Vol. 32, 2000
Contemporary Authors, Vol. 131, 1991
Directory of American Scholars, 2001
Mexican American Biographies: A Historical Dictionary, 1836-1987, 1988
Notable Latino Americans: A Biographical Dictionary, 1997
Something About the Author, Vol. 108, 2000

Periodicals

America, Dec. 24, 2001, p.22
Booklist, Dec. 1, 1997, p.619; Mar. 1, 1999, p.1220; Jan. 1, 2002, p.765
Horn Book, Sep./Oct. 1998, p.532; Jan./Feb. 1999, p.49; Nov./Dec. 2001, p.772
Kirkus Reviews, July 1, 1998, p.967
Publishers Weekly, Oct. 5, 1998, p.90; Sep. 25, 2000, p.72
San Jose Mercury News, Apr. 18, 1993, p.L1; Sep. 10, 1998, p.B8; Nov. 11, 2001, p.E24
Santa Clara Magazine, Spring 1996
School Library Journal, Nov. 1998, p.86; Oct. 2000, p.60; Sep. 2001, p.225
Writing, Feb./Mar. 2001, p.3

Online Database

Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, articles reproduced from *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, 2000, and *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2002

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WORLD WIDE WEB SITE

http://www.scu.edu/diversity/frjim.html

RETROSPECTIVE

Astrid Lindgren 1907-2002

Swedish Children's Author
Creator of *Pippi Longstocking*

BIRTH

Astrid Lindgren was born Astrid Anna Emilia Ericsson on November 14, 1907, in Vimmerby, Sweden. Her parents, Samuel and Hanna Ericsson, were farmers. Astrid was the second of four children, with an older brother, Gunnar, and two younger sisters, Stina and Ingegerd.

YOUTH

Lindgren grew up on her family's 500-year old farm. It was an enchanted life. "Rocks and trees were as close to us as living beings," she recalled, "and nature protected and nurtured our playing and our dreaming." Lindgren had a wonderfully happy childhood on the farm. "I cannot imagine any children having more fun than we had. In those days, there were no automobiles, no radios, no films, no television, no nothing—but there were people, lots of interesting people, and there was a lot of room for imagination."

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As a child, and later as a writer of children's books, Lindgren's imagination was fired by the nature around her. "Whatever our imagination could call forth was enacted in the land around us—all fairy tales, all adventures we invented or read about or heard about, all of it happened there, and only there. Even our songs and prayers had their places in surrounding nature."

A Love of Books and Reading

Lindgren's love of books and reading started early. She remembered loving fairy tales and stories, and she also vividly recalled the joy of having a book all her own. Her neighbor, Edith, read to her from a book containing "the fairytale of the giant Bam-Bam and Viribunda the fairy," she recalled. The book and its message transported her. "From then on my soul trembled whenever I got a new book in my hands."

"After a while I learned how to read myself and I was constantly on the hunt for more books to satisfy my hunger for reading," Lindgren remembered. She never forgot the delight of having her own books. "It was such an incredible, special, and wonderful feeling to have your very own books. I remember exactly the smell of the freshly printed books, because that's what I did first when I was holding a new book: smell it! Nothing in this world could surpass that special smell. After smelling it I read the preface and then I got so excited about what was in store for me and couldn't wait to start reading."

EDUCATION

Lindgren went to the local public schools. She was an excellent student, and she always received particular praise for her writing. In fact, people were always telling her she should be a writer, which made her sure she wouldn't be. "In high school everybody kept telling me that I was going to be an author someday, and I very stubbornly decided never to write any books."

MOVING TO STOCKHOLM

Lindgren's life changed dramatically when she was 18. She became pregnant, and moved to Stockholm to have her son, Lars. Unmarried, Lindgren gave up Lars, who was first raised in foster care in Copenhagen, in nearby Denmark. She got a job working as a secretary for the Royal Automobile Club, where she met her future husband, Sture Lindgren. They married in 1931. Lars came to live with them, and soon they had a daughter, Karin.

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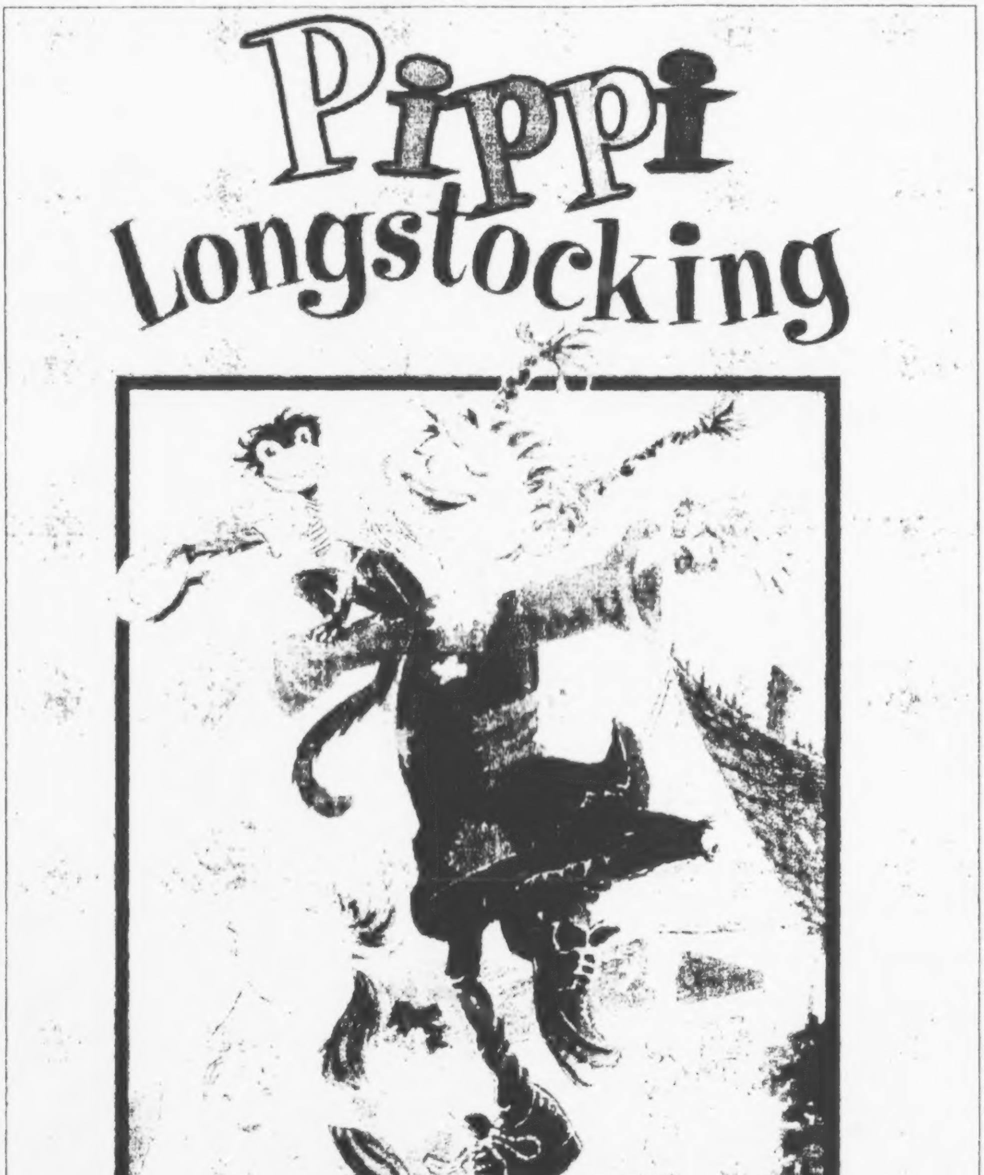
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

In a career that spanned more than 50 years, Lindgren wrote more than 100 works, including novels, picture books, poems, short stories, plays, and screenplays. But she is best known to millions of readers of several generations as the creator of Pippi Longstocking.

Creating Her Famous Character

Karin was actually the inspiration for Lindgren's most famous character, Pippi Longstocking. When Karin was seven, she got pneumonia and had to spend time in bed. She was bored, and she pestered her mother to tell her a story. "What should I tell?" Lindgren asked her daughter. "Tell me about Pippi Longstocking!" said Karin. So Karin made up the name of one of the best-loved characters in children's books. "I didn't ask her who Pippi



Longstocking was," remembered Lindgren. "I just began the story, and since it was a strange name, it turned out to be a strange girl as well."

Lindgren made up several Pippi stories over the next few years, to the delight of her children. But it would be several more years before she actually

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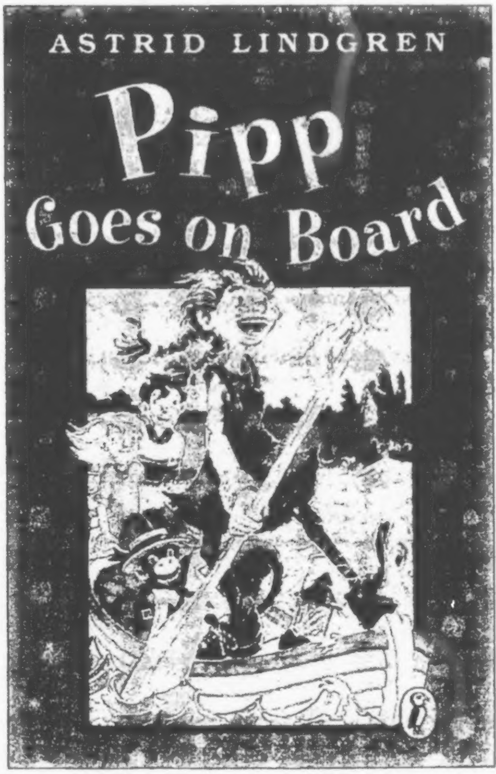
wrote them down. It wasn't until 1944, after she broke her ankle and was confined to bed, that Lindgren finally took the time to write down the first story of her spunky, pugnacious heroine, Pippi Longstocking.

When she finished, she gave the story to Karin as a present for her 10th birthday. Karin adored it, and Lindgren decided to try to find a publisher. She'd actually won second place in an annual publisher's competition the previous year, for a teen-age romance titled *Britt-Mari Opens Her Heart*. Lindgren offered *Pippi Longstocking* to a publisher, who rejected it, so she decided to enter it in the publisher's competition. This time her entry won first prize, and in 1945, *Pippi Longstocking* was finally published. It has gone on to be one of the most beloved—and most successful—children's books of all time. It has sold millions of copies, in over 60 languages.

Pippi Longstocking

Pippilota Delicatessa Windowshade Mackrelmint Efraim's Daughter Longstocking is as unique as her name. Nine years old and fiercely independent, she lives alone in a big house, with a horse on the porch and a monkey on her shoulder. She has fiery red pigtails, wears one black and one brown stocking, and shoes twice as long as her feet. Her mother is dead, but she keeps an eye on Pippi from heaven. Her father, a sea captain, is lost, but Pippi believes he is alive and will come back for her someday. Pippi is the strongest girl in the world, and with a never-ending supply of gold coins, she doesn't need anyone's help or approval. Pippi's next door neighbors, Tommy and Annika, don't know quite what to make of their unconventional friend. Together, they have many rollicking adventures, with Pippi enjoying the complete freedom to do as she pleases and to speak her mind.



Swedish children fell in love with Pippi immediately, and they clamored for more. Soon, as the book became available in translation, millions of children around the world got to know and love Pippi Longstocking. What is it

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about this cherished character that makes her such a favorite? Lindgren said, "This is a child who has power. That is wonderful, for children to think, 'Oh, if I were like Pippi! I could say to Father, You don't do that!'" Even though Pippi has power, said Lindgren, "she never misuses that power, which I think is the most splendid thing, and the most difficult."

Even as the children of the world embraced the free-spirited Pippi, their parents weren't as enthusiastic. When the first *Pippi Longstocking* book came out, some Swedish parents were shocked at the character's rebellious behavior. And it appears that early translators of the work actually censored the real Pippi. A recent study has shown that the first English, French, and German translations actually toned down Pippi's antics to render the character more "acceptable" to worried parents. Recent translations more accurately reflect the true nature of Pippi as her creator intended her to be.

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Pippi returned in several sequels, including *Pippi Goes on Board* (1957), *Pippi in the South Seas* (1957), *Pippi on the Run* (1976), *Pippi Longstocking's After-Christmas Party* (1996), and *The Adventures of Pippi Longstocking* (1997). These were welcomed by Lindgren's many eager fans.

Other Favorites

In addition to the Pippi books, Lindgren has written many other favorites for young readers, including those featuring Emil, Bill Bergson, Karlsson-on-the-Roof, and the Bullerby children. Emil, a spirited five-year-old boy, was Lindgren's favorite character. He appears in such popular books as *Emil in the Soup Tureen* (1970), *Emil's Pranks* (1971), *Emil and Piggy Beast* (1973), *That Emil* (1973), and *Emil and Lina's Bad Tooth* (1977). In addition to Emil, Lindgren created a recurring character in Bill Bergson, a young detective. His adventures are chronicled in *Bill Bergson, Master Detective* (1952) and *Bill Bergson Lives Dangerously* (1954). *Karlsson-on-the-Roof* (1971) features a title character equipped with a propeller on his back, so he can fly wherever he wishes.

Lindgren's series featuring the Bullerby children of Noisy Village was especially close to her heart. Based on her recollections of her own youth on the farm, the books describe the joys of everyday life in the country as the seasons change. In books like *The Children of Noisy Village* (1962), *The Six Bullerby Children* (1963), *Christmas in Noisy Village* (1964), *Springtime in Noisy Village* (1966), and *A Day at Bullerby* (1967), Lindgren gave her memory free rein to recall the simple pleasures of her childhood. Her recollections of farm life were vivid into her late years. "I know how the tongue of a calf feels against a hand, and how rabbits smell, and how milk sounds when it strikes the bottom of a bucket, and the feel of small chicken feet when one holds a newly hatched chick."

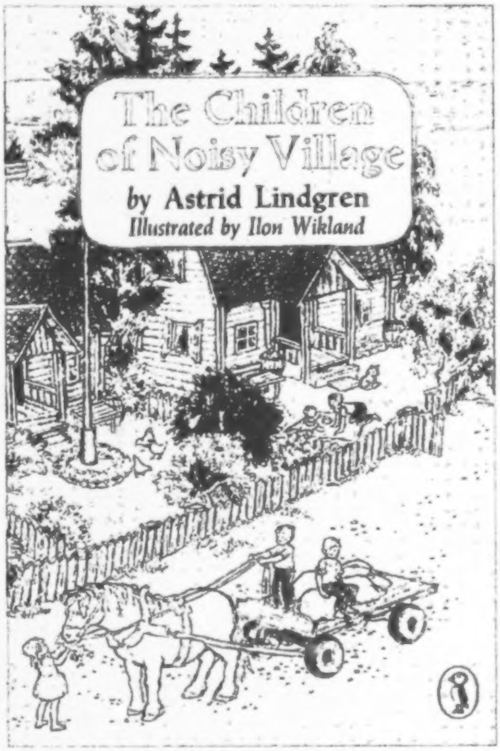
Lindgren often said, "My childhood is in whatever I write." "I write for one child only," she claimed. "A child who is sometimes six, sometimes eight, and sometimes 11 years old. And yet it's always the same child. She was a girl and she lived on a farm in Sweden many years ago."

> *"My childhood is in whatever I write," Lindgren claimed. "I write for one child only. A child who is sometimes six, sometimes eight, and sometimes 11 years old. And yet it's always the same child. She was a girl and she lived on a farm in Sweden many years ago."*

Lindgren's books were not all sunny and humorous. She wrote adaptations of Swedish fairy tales and stories with child characters who face poverty and danger. These works are written with the magic of fantasy, but without sentimentality. One of her books that remains a favorite, *Mio, My Son*, is about a lonely orphan who must fight evil far away from home. In *The Brothers Lionheart* she wrote about death, a subject rarely touched on in children's books of that era. In books like *Mio* and *The Brothers Lionheart*, Lindgren's young characters show readers that "you can be brave even if you are frightened."

Lindgren was a woman of great creative energy. During most of the years she wrote about Pippi, Emil, and the children of Noisy Village, she also worked as a children's book editor for a Swedish publisher. "I wrote my books in bed, very early in the morning, in shorthand," she recalled. "After two hours I got up, put on my clothes and walked to the publishing house and edited other people's books." It wasn't until 1970, when she was 63, that Lindgren retired from her publishing job to write full-time.

Screen and Stage Adaptations



Pippi proved so popular that Lindgren wrote plays and screenplays featuring her famous character. She also wrote play adaptations featuring several of her other favorite characters, including Emil and Karlsson. Television versions of her books also aired in Sweden, then in the rest of the world in translated versions. And many Swedes remember with fondness the radio broadcasts in which she read her stories aloud.

Lindgren's success won her many prestigious awards. She was the first woman ever elected to the Swedish Academy, an elite organization of artists, writers, and academics. She received the Hans Christian Andersen Medal in 1958, which is one of the highest awards in children's literature. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) gave her its International Book Award in 1993. There was even a movement in her native Sweden to have her considered for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

An Activist

Lindgren didn't limit her interests to writing. She was also active in social causes, including taxes, animal rights, and children's health. In the 1970s, she wrote a biting satire about Sweden's tax system, which required self-employed people like Lindgren to pay 102 percent of their income. The tax laws were rewritten after that, which some attributed to her forceful and funny piece.

In 1988, Lindgren became involved in the fight for animal rights. She argued that farm animals—chicken, cattle, and pigs—should be raised without hormones or antibiotics. Those additives were used to make the animals grow more quickly, she argued, maximizing farmers' profits and minimizing the quality of life for the animals. She also contended that farm animals should be allowed to graze freely and not be cooped up in

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small pens for their entire lives. She took her concerns to the Swedish government, where she lobbied for a bill in support of her beliefs. The bill was passed, and became known as "Astrid's Law" in Sweden. More than 10 years after her efforts, similar laws are being considered by the U.S.

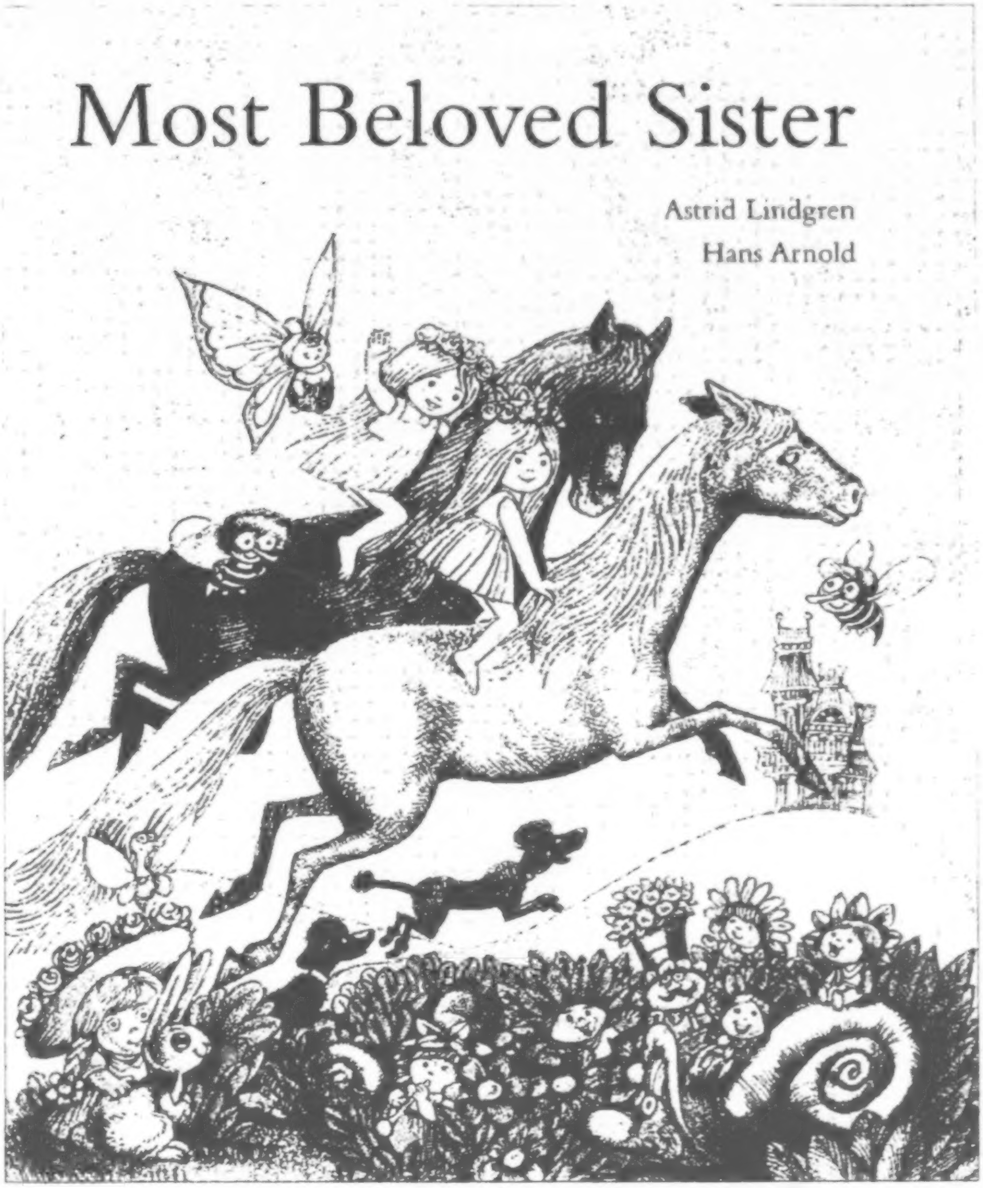
The year 1998 marked the opening of a special hospital for children, the Astrid Lindgren Center for Pediatrics and Pediatric Surgery. Funded by Lindgren, it is one of the largest children's hospitals in northern Europe. Its purpose is to provide a warm, nonthreatening environment for children with serious diseases. The staff is trained to explain to the young patients, in language they can understand, the nature of their diseases and what their treatment will be like. It is a model for the best in pediatric health care.

> *"All great things that have happened in the world happened first of all in someone's imagination, and the aspect of the world of tomorrow depends largely on the extent of the power of imagination in those who are just now learning to read. This is why children must have books, and why there must be people who really care what kind of books are put into the children's hands."*

On Writing for Young People

Lindgren had great respect for her young readers, and for the power and importance of reading. "All great things that have happened in the world happened first of all in someone's imagination, and the aspect of the world of tomorrow depends largely on the extent of the power of imagination in those who are just now learning to read. This is why children must have books, and why there must be people who really care what kind of books are put into the children's hands."

She was grateful to her young readers, who, she claimed, made up for any flaws on the part of the author. "Children work miracles when they read. They take our poor sentences and words and give them a life which in themselves they do not have. The author alone does not create all the mystical essence contained within the page of a book. The reader must help. But the author of books for adults has no willing little helpers at his disposal as we have. His readers do not work miracles. It is the child and *only* the child who has the imagination to build a fairy castle if you provide him with a few small bricks."



Most Beloved Sister

Astrid Lindgren

Hans Arnold

This beloved creator of children's classics died at her home in Stockholm on January 28, 2002, at the age of 94. The government of Sweden, which had already honored her with a series of postage stamps, released a new coin in her honor. It features Lindgren on one side and Pippi on the other. Pippi's monkey, Mr. Nilsson, sits on the numbers on the coin. A portion of each sale goes to fund her children's hospital. The government also started an international children's literature prize in her honor. And her many fans continue to visit her former home in Vimmerby, now a park called Astrid Lindgren's World.

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The saga of Pippi Longstocking continued in late 2002. A staff member at the Royal Library of Sweden discovered a long-forgotten story, "Pippi Longstocking Celebrates Christmas," among the papers Lindgren had left to the Library. Her publisher plans to have it ready for publication in time for Christmas 2003.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Astrid Ericsson married Sture Lindgren in 1931. She had two children, Lars, from an earlier relationship, and Karin. Sture Lindgren died in 1952, and Lars died in 1986. At the time of her death, Lindgren had seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

SELECTED WRITINGS

Note: Dates below refer to the publication dates for English-language translations, rather than the publication dates for the original Swedish versions.

Pippi Longstocking Books

Pippi Longstocking, 1950
Pippi Goes on Board, 1957
Pippi in the South Seas, 1957
Pippi on the Run, 1976
Pippi Longstocking's After-Christmas Party, 1996
The Adventures of Pippi Longstocking, 1997

Bill Bergson Books

Bill Bergson, Master Detective, 1952
Bill Bergson Lives Dangerously, 1954

Bullerby Books

The Children of Noisy Village, 1962
The Six Bullerby Children, 1963
Christmas in Noisy Village, 1964
Springtime in Noisy Village, 1966
A Day at Bullerby, 1967

Emil Books

Emil in the Soup Tureen, 1970
Emil's Pranks, 1971

Emil and Piggy Beast, 1973
That Emil, 1973
Emil and Lina's Bad Tooth, 1977

Other Books

Mio, My Son, 1956
Sia Lives on Kilimanjaro, 1959
The Tomten, 1961
Marko Lives in Yugoslavia, 1962
Mischievous Meg, 1962
Gerda Lives in Norway, 1965
Matti Lives in Finland, 1969
Karlsson-on-the-Roof, 1971
The Brothers Lionheart, 1975
Karlson Flies Again, 1977
Ronia, the Robber's Daughter, 1983
Most Beloved Sister, 2002

HONORS AND AWARDS

Hans Christian Andersen Author Award (International Board on Books for Young People): 1958
Albert Schweitzer Award (Animal Welfare Fund): 1989
International Book Award (UNESCO): 1993

FURTHER READING

Books

Contemporary Authors New Revision Series, Vol. 39, 1992; Vol. 80, 1999
Hurwitz, Johanna. *Astrid Lindgren: Storyteller to the World*, 1989
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St. James Guide to Children's Writers, 1999

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New York Times, Jan. 29, 2002, p.A25
Newsday, Nov. 12, 1989, p.79
Publishers Weekly, Feb. 18, 2002, p.34
School Library Journal, Mar. 2002, p.18
Times (London), Jan. 29, 2002
Times Higher Education Supplement, Mar. 21, 1997, p.8
Variety, Feb. 10, 2002, p.60
Washington Post, Mar. 20, 1989, p.B1; Jan 29, 2002, p.B7, C1

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Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, article from *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2002

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http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/lindgren.htm
http://www.penguinputnam.com

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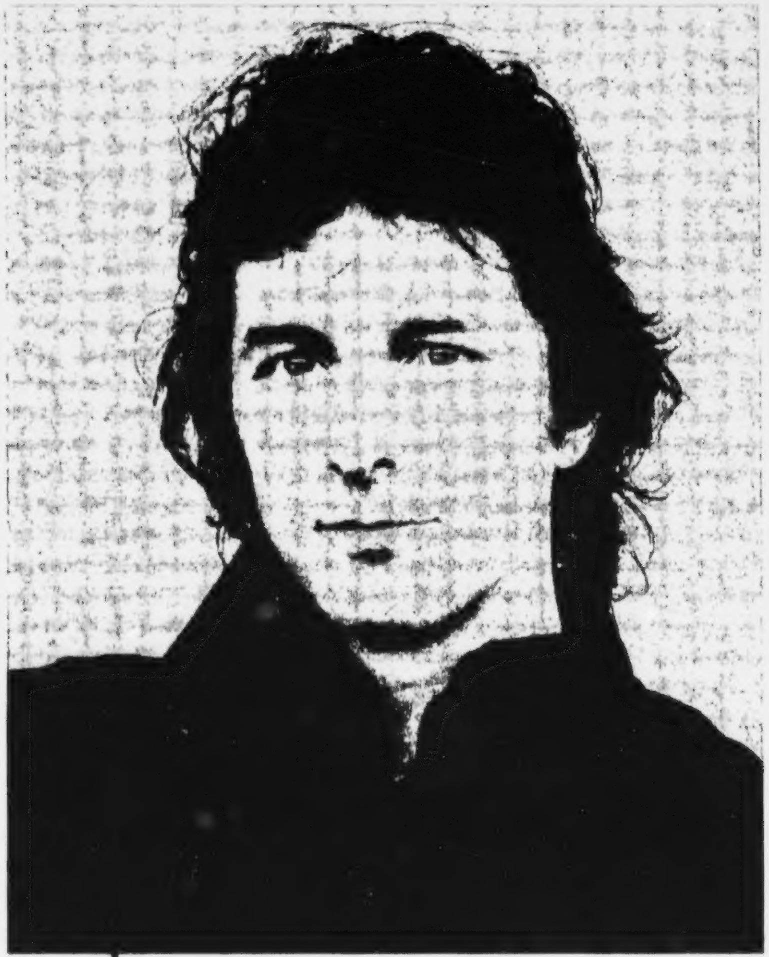

Chris Lynch 1962-

American Writer for Young Adults
Author of *Freewill*

BIRTH

Chris Lynch was born on July 2, 1962, in Boston, Massachusetts. He is the fifth of seven children born to Edward Lynch, a bus driver, and Dorothy O'Brien Lynch, a receptionist.

YOUTH

Lynch spent his early years growing up in the Jamaica Plains district of Boston. The 1960s era, when he was a boy there, was a time of big changes in this neighborhood, as more and more Hispanic families were moving into this traditionally Irish-Catholic area. In addition to this change, Lynch's father died when he was only five. As a result the family suffered financial problems and became poor, and they had to rely on public assistance programs. It was up to his mother to raise seven children all by herself, and Lynch remembers that she "did a good job of covering it up. . . . We were definitely a free cheese family, though I never felt deprived as a kid."

EDUCATION

Lynch loved going to grammar school. Later, in seventh grade, he got his first taste of writing when one of his teachers, Sister Elizabeth Brennan, encouraged him to try it. However, he was afraid the other students would think he was a nerd if he read too much, so he put books aside to be more like his friends and play sports. Lynch liked to play street hockey and other unorganized games, but when he entered high school he learned to despise athletics. "I hated high school — every minute," he said. "It was rigid, kind of a factory. An all-boys' football factory. Nothing like the arts was encouraged in any way." It wasn't that Lynch hated sports — in fact he is a big fan of the Boston Bruins. But he hated that the teachers and administrators at his high school were focused on nothing *but* competitive athletics.

Because he wanted to escape high school so badly, Lynch dropped out his junior year and enrolled at Boston University, which admitted students without a high school diploma as long as they were academically qualified. In college, he tried different majors, including political science and music, but nothing suited him. Finally, he decided to explore writing again and took a course in journalism. He enjoyed it so much that he switched his major to journalism and transferred to Suffolk University. "But I was still hiding from myself," he admitted. "At Suffolk I took a novel-writing class, which helped lead me closer to what I was really going for all the time. But I just wouldn't allow it. Wouldn't let myself say that I wanted to be an artist." Lynch completed his bachelor of arts degree (B.A.) in journalism in 1983. He later returned to school and earned a master's degree (M.A.) in 1991 in professional writing and publishing from Emerson University.

FIRST JOBS

After finishing his bachelor's degree in 1983, Lynch was still torn about what to do with his life. Instead of looking for a job at a newspaper, which would have been appropriate for his journalism degree, he worked for a time painting houses and driving a moving van. Then, from 1985 until

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1989, he got a job proofreading financial reports. This was tedious, uninspiring work. "That kind of work can really give a person a shove," he said. "I figured there had to be something more out there. I had enough optimism to think there was something for me to learn."

BECOMING A WRITER

Wanting to explore what he could do as an author, Lynch decided to return to school. He enrolled at Emerson University in Boston, where he studied professional writing and publishing in an effort to follow a practical course into the world of books. But even this, he felt, was a strategy for avoiding what he should really try to do. "[I had] to think of myself as an editor or publisher," he said. "Not a creative writer. All this reflects my feeling that you've got to put up first; you've got to earn titles." Still, he tried taking some creative writing courses, feeling the need to create something original. "I started out writing adult fiction in graduate school," he said, "writing the same self-regarding stories I was hearing from a lot of other people, boring myself and everybody else stupid. I frankly didn't have much of a clue, other than a fairly vague notion that I wanted to write, even if it was writing badly, and writing about pointless crap."

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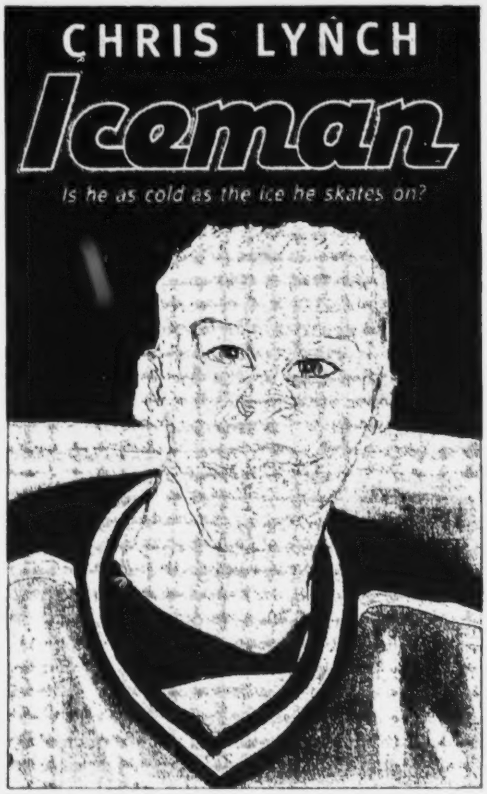
Everything changed for Lynch when he took a children's writing course from Jack Gantos, the acclaimed children's author best known for his "Rotten Ralph" books. (For more information on Gantos, see *Biography Today Authors*, Vol. 10.) One day, Gantos gave his students an assignment to write five pages about anything they wanted. "The assignment made me start thinking about what I really wanted to write about," Lynch recalled. "As soon as I started digging around in my adolescence," he said, "my writing came alive." He began to write a book that drew on his memories of growing up in Boston, using his past not to write autobiography but to create fiction. Believing that the resulting novel had real potential, Gantos helped his student get it published by recommending him to an agent. After editing the manuscript with help from his agent, Lynch found a publisher for his first novel, *Shadow Boxer*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Once *Shadow Boxer* was published in 1993, Lynch hit the ground running. "The author of [almost 20] novels and numerous short stories in his first decade as a children's writer, Chris Lynch creates tough and edgy streetwise fiction," summed up the reviewer for *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*. "Episodic and fast-paced, his fiction questions the male stereotypes of macho identity and inarticulate violence. His youthful characters are often athletes, or wanna-be athletes, or kids who have been churned up and spit out by the system. Outsiders all, Lynch's protagonists desperately want to be accepted for who they are. . . . Using irony and a searing honesty that cuts through adolescent facades, Lynch lays out clearly what it means to be young and urban and male in the United States near the turn of the 21st century."

> ***"I want to tell realistic stories, which I think come with their own messages built into them without having to preach," Lynch said when asked about his portrayals of tough kids surviving awful home lives. "In a nutshell, I think a brutal story tells itself, and there are some brutal stories within my stories. My characters tend to do more damage to themselves than to anyone else."***

In his books, Lynch often addresses issues that are prominent in the lives of young men, including the importance of sports, the role of violence, and the difficulties of becoming a man. The tone of his books varies dramatically: some are funny and lighthearted, others are biting, while others are disturbing and violent. Yet all reflect his deep sympathy for his characters and the struggles they face. Many of his characters are in some way outcasts, rejected or ignored by their peers or dealing with troubled families. Many of these books, such as *Iceman* and *Freewill,* deal with very serious situations and feature characters who react violently against their circumstances. "I want to tell realistic stories, which I think come with their own messages built into them without having to preach," Lynch said when asked about his portrayals of tough kids surviving awful home lives. "In a nutshell, I think a brutal story tells itself, and there are some brutal stories within my stories. My characters tend to do more damage to themselves than to anyone else."

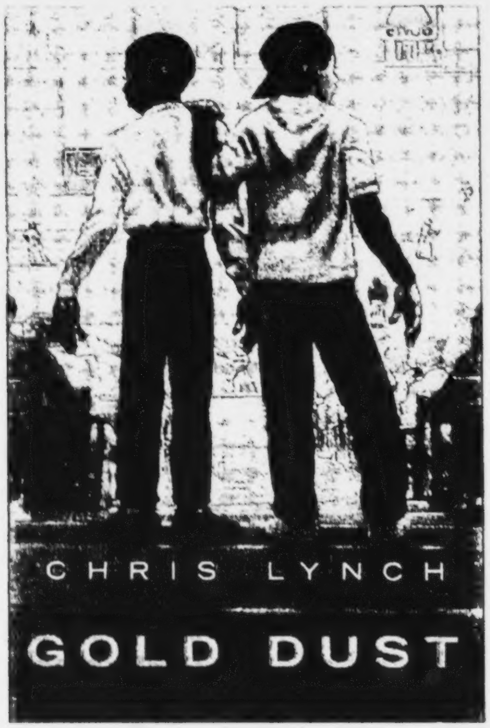


The Role of Sports

In his debut novel, *Shadow Boxer,* Lynch wrote about two brothers, 14-year-old George and 11-year-old Monty, whose father was a boxer who died as a result of injuries he received in the ring. George consequently doesn't want to become a boxer, but Monty has a burning desire to follow in his father's footsteps. Monty is desperate to fill the hole left by his father's death and relentlessly works out in the ring, but George worries that this course will lead Monty to the same fate their dad suffered. Their mother and Uncle Archie are concerned, too, but will they be able to convince Monty to deal with his loss some other way? Set in Lynch's native Boston, the story also includes many secondary characters, such as physically and emotionally abused Fred and Mary, who add to the theme of children and adolescents trying to survive in a difficult world.

Shadow Boxer made the American Library Association list of Best Books for Young Adults, which is quite an accomplishment for a first-time author. It was praised by many critics; for example, *Horn Book* reviewer Peter D. Sieruta said that "the fight sequences, fraternal dynamics, and memorable cast of eccentric characters make for some riveting episodes in this rough, tough-talking book about boxing and brotherhood." And a *Publishers Weekly* writer considered *Shadow Boxer* to be "telling in its depiction of adolescence, often moving, occasionally funny, and quite promising."

Sports of various kinds are often a central feature of Lynch's books. While in *Shadow Boxer* it was boxing, in *Iceman* it's ice hockey that is important to plot and characterization. For Lynch, sports can serve as a metaphor: his characters use athletics as a way to solve — or at least deal with — serious problems in their lives. *Iceman* is about Eric, a 14-year-old hockey player who comes from a dysfunctional family. His parents can't seem to give him



the emotional support he needs, and so he deals with his growing inner rage by taking out his aggressions on the ice rink. He becomes so violent when he checks other players that even his teammates begin to fear and shun him. The novel then explores how Eric starts to seek the support he needs from some rather unlikely sources. According to *Booklist* critic Stephanie Zvirin, *Iceman* was "a thought-provoking book guaranteed to compel and touch a teenage audience."

In *Gold Dust*, sports again play a central role in the novel, but in a very different way. In this story, set in Boston during the 1970s, 12-year-old Richard is obsessed with baseball. When he meets Napoleon, an athletically talented Dominican boy, Richard hopes that he and his new friend will become baseball stars together. Napoleon, however, only learns to play baseball for the sake of his new friend. Although they share a certain bond in sports, Napoleon, who is black and upper-class, and Richard, who is white and comes from a working-class home, prove to have many other differences that could rip their friendship apart. Can baseball possibly save them?

In these books, critics have been impressed with how well Lynch depicts the importance of sports in young people's lives. For instance, Debbie Carton wrote in *Booklist* that "Lynch captures the thrill of the game and an athlete's intense physical and mental concentration with freshness and joy," while *School Library Journal* critic Michael McCullough said that "True sports fans will identify with Richard's vivid descriptions of the game." Lynch himself has said that he believes "participatory sports are spectacularly beneficial for young people. I think it's a healthy outlet for—not violence—but energy. There actually are some fairly useful life lessons to be gained from competition and teamwork, in addition to the priceless physical and psychological benefits that come from running around, jumping, falling, banging into things, getting exhausted." What he dislikes, however, is the commercialization of the sport and the hype behind athlete superstars. "I wish the highest-profile athletes would spend more time talking

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about the joy of doing what they do, rather than the burdens of superstardom," Lynch said. He also objects to the way kids are made to play sports in order to conform to what parents and teachers think they should be.

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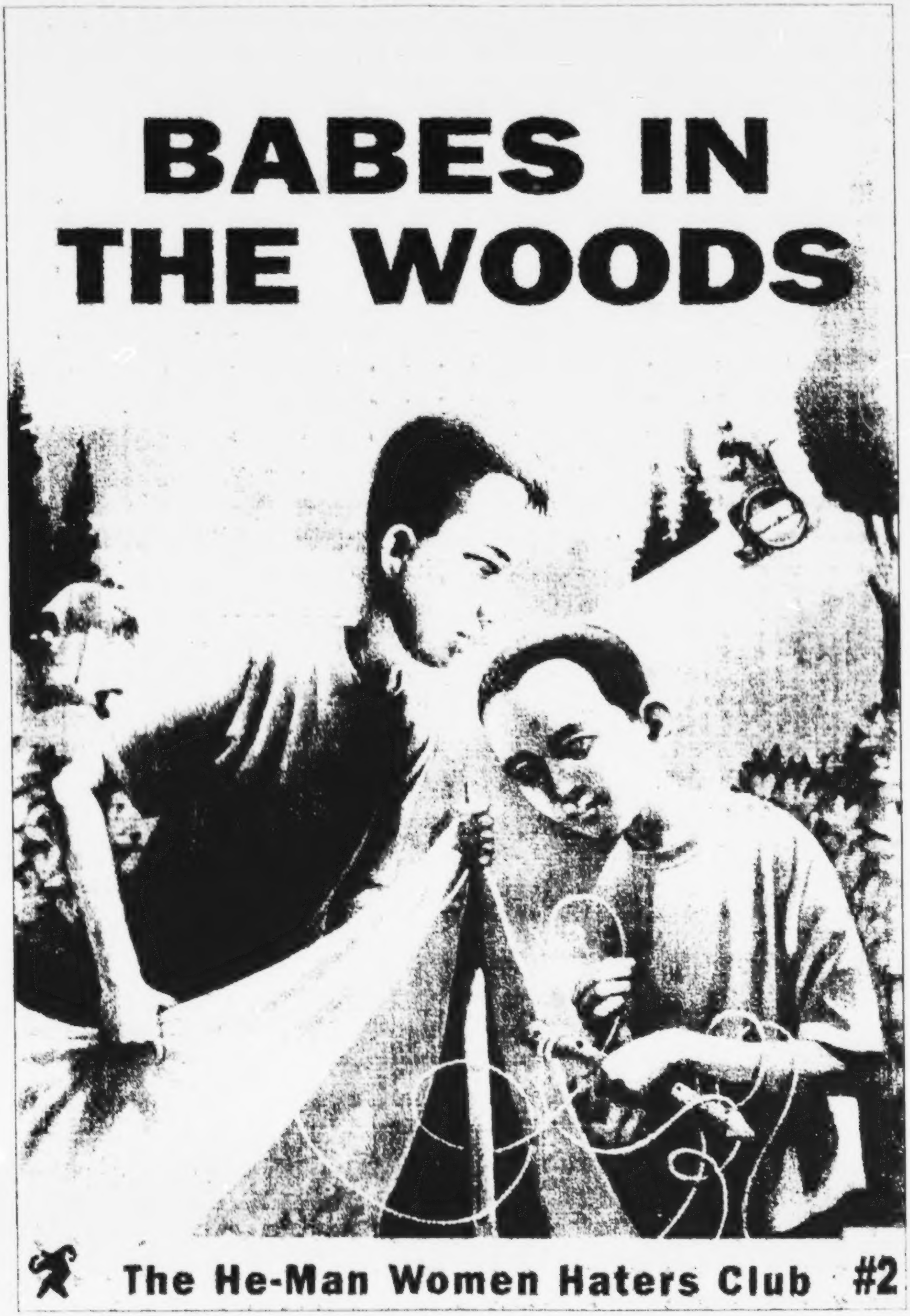
The Elvin Bishop Books

A good example of Lynch's stand on the subject of sports in kids' lives can be found in his novel *Slot Machine*. The main character is Elvin Bishop, a decidedly unathletic, overweight, 14-year-old boy. He is sent to the Christian Brothers Academy "orientation" for three weeks of drilling to find out which sport he is best suited for. What follows is a string of humorous episodes as the wise-cracking Elvin fails miserably at sport after sport. At the same time Elvin is being bounced around, however, he watches as his friend Frankie pays a high price in humiliation in order to fit in with the golf team. "Lynch writes a damning commentary on the costs of conformity and the power gained by standing up for oneself in his biting, sometimes hilarious novel," wrote Maeve Visser Knoth in a *Horn Book* review of *Slot Machine*.

Lynch enjoyed writing about Elvin so much that the character made an encore appearance in *Extreme Elvin*. This time, it's not sports but fitting into the social scene at his high school that gives the awkward but likeable Elvin a lot of headaches. Elvin experiences all sorts of embarrassing problems: when the school kids find out he has hemorrhoids, they start calling him the Velveteen Sphincter; his fellow students also convince him that he has caught a sexually transmitted disease because he held hands with a girl; and he feels pressured to ask a pretty and popular girl for a date, even though he likes a chubby and less popular girl better. Although *Booklist* critic Stephanie Zvirin felt that the author



sometimes sacrificed plotting for humor, she and other reviewers enjoyed *Extreme Elvin,* especially the main character. "Because Elvin is unquestionably a good-hearted, right-thinking sort," said Zvirin, "he's easy to root for."

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The "He-Man Women Haters Club" Series

Lynch has said that he sometimes feels a strong urge to write something funny and lighthearted. "We need all kinds of books," he once said, "but I personally couldn't survive without a steady diet of laughs." This is why he wrote his "He-Man Women Haters Club" series, which includes the novels *Johnny Chesthair, Babes in the Woods, Scratch and the Sniffs, Ladies' Choice,* and *The Wolf Gang.* The books are about a group of misfit boys who form a club that excludes girls and seeks to develop each member's sense of masculinity and machismo. However, with each installment of the series the boys' efforts to be manly fail miserably—and hilariously. In *Johnny Chesthair,* for example, club president Steven, who gets his ideas about manliness from his brutish father and survivalist uncle, is impeached after he embarrasses himself on a television talk show on the "men's movement." Jerome, who is the towel boy for the school swim team, assumes the presidency in *Babes in the Woods.* But he falls into disfavor on a camping trip when he loses a hunting competition. Jerome is replaced by Wolfgang, a tough guy who also happens to be handicapped, in *Scratch and the Sniffs.* Here, Wolfgang decides the gang should form a band that plays a unique kind of music he calls "jug-punk." When it looks like the band is going to get a contract to do a video, everyone is excited—until they find out that the plan is to put them on "America's Funniest Home Videos." The next two books, *Ladies' Choice* and *The Wolf Gang,* have the club members being duped into attending a dance and then inviting women into their club.

Critics of the series loved Lynch's blend of humor and teenage angst in "The He-Man Women Haters Club." They called the stories both entertaining and sympathetic to the growing pains experienced by eighth-grade boys. As Shelle Rosenfeld wrote in a *Booklist* review of *The Wolf Gang,* "Lynch's presentation of the boys' seesawing view of girls as enemies or attractions is dead-on, as is his portrayal of the ties of friendship that bind." And a *Publishers Weekly* critic noted that "though the tone is light—at least on the surface—and the pace snappy, there is plenty of food for thought here on the subject of male identity and gender relations."

The "Blue-Eyed Son" Trilogy

The struggles boys go through to become men can be viewed with humor, as in Lynch's "He-Man Women Haters Club" books, or much more earnestly, as in the author's "Blue-Eyed Son" trilogy. Set in an Irish neighborhood in Boston very much like the area where Lynch grew up, the three books include *Mick, Blood Relations,* and *Dog Eat Dog.* The central character is Mick, the son of working-class alcoholics and the younger brother of Terry, a tough-guy and bigot. Lynch paints an unhappy picture of Mick's home life. The boy often finds himself subjected to beatings and humiliation, yet he is told repeatedly that he must remain true to his family and his Irish-Catholic background. Problems begin to arise in Mick's neighborhood as more minorities, especially Hispanics, begin to move in. The older residents, including Mick's family, resent their presence. Mick, on the other hand, finds friendship with two Hispanic classmates, Toy and Evelyn, who try to offer him moral support. Over the course of the books, tensions between Mick and his family increase, leading to a climactic point where Mick has to decide whether he will become someone bigoted like Terry or manage to break free of the cycle of hatred.

> *"[With] underpinnings of violence; edgy, quirky characters; rough street language; and Mick's own penchant for self-destructive behavior, the ["Blue-Eyed Son"] trilogy is unsettling. But Lynch eases the tension with a scattering of brief scenes that glow with humor."*
> *— Chris Sherman,* Booklist

The "Blue-Eyed Son" books have been widely praised by book reviewers. Even though the trilogy depicts a violent and ugly world, one *Publishers Weekly* reviewer called them "powerful, thought-provoking, and disturbing." *Booklist* writer Chris Sherman similarly said that "with underpinnings of violence; edgy, quirky characters; rough street language; and Mick's own penchant for self-destructive behavior, the trilogy is unsettling. But Lynch eases the tension with a scattering of brief scenes that glow with humor." Sherman also felt that the characters of Mick and his Latino friends are vividly drawn and that the trilogy would especially appeal to reluctant readers.

Breaking Free from Fate

The struggle to break away from the violence, alcoholism, and narrow-mindedness of his home life that Mick endures is a recurring theme in Lynch's books. In fact, he often writes about such young people trying to break away or escape. In *Gypsy Davey*, Lynch gives his main character, Davey, not only the disadvantages of a dysfunctional family but also a handicap, for Davey is mentally challenged. He has other problems as well:

his mother is a "drunken floozy," as one *Publishers Weekly* reviewer described her; his father is manipulative and irresponsible; and his sister is just as bad as the mother. Yet despite all his disadvantages, Davey's love for his sister's son, Dennis, might be the key that allows him to rise above it all.

The theme of escape is also prevalent in his novel *Whitechurch*. This series of connected stories are linked by three teen characters, Lilly, Pauly, and Oakley, who all long to escape small town life. While their once peaceful town is being torn apart by a debate over the opening of a new prison, the teenagers are facing their own growing crisis. Pauly and Oakley feel as if they can't find a way to escape Whitechurch, while Lilly, with whom they have both fallen in love, might just get that chance. Over the course of the book, the rising tensions between the three turn dark and disturbing as Pauly gets his hands on a gun and chooses to become a criminal. "What we don't know for sure is who he'll take down with him," wrote a *Horn Book Magazine* critic, "and therein lies the tension of the novel." As a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer concluded, "The bleak, detached handling of disturbing, often violent material reserves this work for mature readers."

Freewill

Lynch addresses one of today's most disturbing tragedies—teen suicide—in his 2001 novel, *Freewill*. "The small spark of the idea for *Freewill* came from a post-Columbine story I read in the paper," said the author, referring to the mass-murder/suicides at Columbine High School in Colorado. "[It was] about a man who had erected monuments to all the victims. Near the site of the tragedy, the man had put up one wooden cross to represent each of the dead—including the two shooters. There was some outrage at the fact that he'd included them in his memorial, and he was eventually forced to take them all down. But I found his idea, the man, his motivation, his own personal relationship to the event, unforgettable." The author also stated that he wrote the book because he "wanted to address the subject of the legacy of suicide, to explore the feelings involved for someone who is left to deal with suicide."

Freewill is about a town in the grip of a series of teen suicides. Events are told in the second person by an emotionally disturbed, 17-year-old narrator named Will, who has lost his parents and lives with his grandparents. Will constantly doubts his own worth and suspects that his grandparents and other people around him don't so much like him as merely tolerate his presence. He finds some outlet for his emotions through woodworking in shop class, and he proves to be very talented at carving. But his wood carvings start to appear at some scenes of violence, leading to questions about his involvement. "This is a dark, rich young-adult novel that offers something to think about as well as an intriguing story," wrote Susan Dove Lempke in a *Booklist* review. In fact, reviewers and critics were very impressed with *Freewill*, and it was named a Michael Printz Award Honor Book, a runner-up to one of the most prestigious prizes in young adult literature.

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Recently, Lynch has published two new books. *All the Old Haunts* is a collection of 10 short stories that all feature teens in a variety of difficult and emotional situations: a father-son relationship, a complicated threesome, a couple dealing with an unintended pregnancy, a kid tormented by memories of a dead cousin. The stories have been described as intense and disturbing, with many plot twists and few easy answers. According to Angela J. Reynolds in *School Library Journal*, "Teens who enjoy deftly crafted tales with more than a hint of the dark side will appreciate this sophisticated prose."

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Lynch's other recent book is the novel *Who the Man*. The protagonist is 13-year-old Earl Pryor, who is so big for his age that older kids ask him to buy beer for them. Bigger than the other kids, he is quick to use violence to solve problems. The story captures a week in which Earl's life is turned

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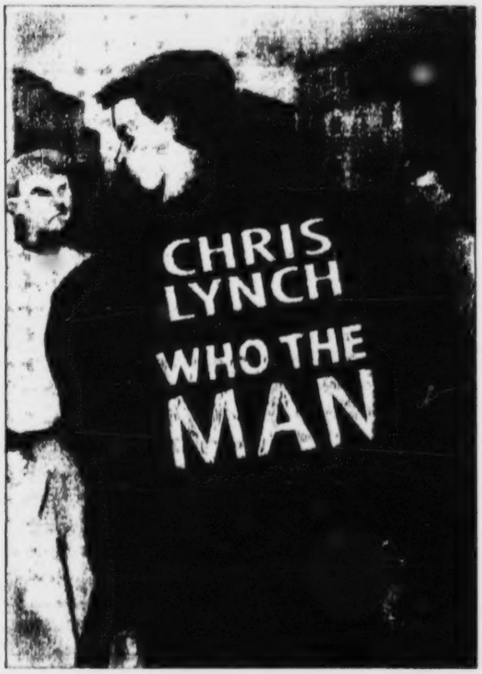

upside down as he's suspended from school for fighting and as his parents' marriage is disintegrating. As Earl feels that everything around him is falling apart, the novel reveals his difficult transition to adulthood. As Ed Sullivan wrote in *Booklist*, "In this testosterone-laden tale, Lynch challenges readers to consider gender stereotypes—boys don't cry; boys solve their problems with their fists—as he follows a young man's painful journey toward self-discovery."

Violence and Controversy

Many of Lynch's novels for teens have become controversial because they contain violent scenes, and some libraries have banned his books from their collections. Of this practice, the author once said, "I sympathize with parents who fret about what life is bringing their growing-up children. I am one of those parents. . . . But I don't sympathize when their solution is to take away access to information. Writers of realistic teen fiction are not bringing these ideas to kids like some kind of anti-social menu. We are just distilling for them the stories, as we know them, as we lived them, that may partly help them make their way."

The violence in some of his books, Lynch feels, is necessary to make his subject matter believable. When he writes about teens living in nearly intolerable conditions, he feels that violent scenes are realistic and essential. The most extreme example of this, the author believes, is his "Blue-Eyed Son" trilogy. "I never used violence so pervasively before or since," he said, "but I think through it all what came out was the profound ugliness, the ignorance of lives devoted to hatred and blood." Though his serious novels might not offer easy solutions to the problems facing teens and their families today, they do strive to emphasize that violence is not the answer.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Lynch married Tina Coviello, a technical support manager, on August 5, 1989. They live in Boston, Massachusetts, with their two children, Sophia and Walker.

WRITINGS

Young Adult Fiction

Shadow Boxer, 1993
Iceman, 1994
Gypsy Davey, 1994
Slot Machine, 1995
Political Timber, 1996
Extreme Elvin, 1999
Whitechurch, 1999
Gold Dust, 2000
Freewill, 2001
All the Old Haunts, 2001
Who the Man, 2002

"Blue-Eyed Son" Trilogy

Mick, 1996
Blood Relations, 1996
Dog Eat Dog, 1996

"He-Man Women Haters Club" Series

Johnny Chesthair, 1997
Babes in the Woods, 1997
Scratch and the Sniffs, 1997
Ladies' Choice, 1997
The Wolf Gang, 1998

HONORS AND AWARDS

Best Books for Young Adults (American Library Association): 1993, for *Shadow Boxer*; 1994, for *Iceman* and *Gypsy Davey*; 1996, for *Slot Machine*
Best Books of the Year (*School Library Journal*): 1993, for *Shadow Boxer*
Editor's Choice Award (*Booklist*): 1994, for *Gypsy Davey*
Blue Ribbon Award (*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*): 1994, for *Iceman* and *Gypsy Davey*
Book of the Year Award (*Hungry Mind Review*): 1997, for *Slot Machine*
Young Adults' Choice Citation (International Reading Association): 1997, for *Slot Machine*

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WORLD WIDE WEB SITE

http://www.harperchildrens.com/HCH/Author/Author/lynch/feature.asp
http://www.harpercollins.com
http://www.teenreads.com/authors

Marilyn Nelson 1946-

American Poet
Author of *Carver: A Life in Poems*

BIRTH

Marilyn Nelson was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on April 26, 1946. She is the oldest of four children born to Melvin Nelson, a navigator and career officer in the U. S. Air Force, and Johnnie (Mitchell) Nelson, a teacher. She has a sister, Jennifer, and a brother, Mel. Another brother, Michael, was born with Down Syndrome in 1958 and died when he was three.

YOUTH

Marilyn and her siblings were brought up to take great pride in their family history. Her great-grandparents on her mother's side had been born into slavery, but their offspring were, in Nelson's words, "teachers and preachers and darers." One of them even became president of Kentucky State College. Her father, Melvin Nelson, was one of the famed "Tuskegee Airmen," a group of African-Americans who were trained as pilots during World War II at Tuskegee Institute, the all-black Alabama college founded by Booker T. Washington in 1881. The war ended before Melvin Nelson was able to get into combat, but he was recalled for military service when the Korean War broke out in 1950, and he remained in the Air Force throughout Marilyn's childhood. Her parents, she recalls, "encouraged us to dream big, and they had confidence in our ability to be what we dreamed."

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> ***When the family moved to Maine, Nelson says, "That year was a turning point for me. Our house was only a few doors from the library, and I read almost every book in it."***
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> *"*

The Nelson family moved frequently to Air Force bases in Texas, Kansas, Colorado, California, New Hampshire, Maine, and Oklahoma. Marilyn particularly remembers the old colonial house they rented near the ocean in Kittery Point, Maine, where they were the first black family to live in town. "That year was a turning point for me," she says. "Our house was only a few doors from the library, and I read almost every book in it." It was during her stay in Kittery Point that she decided she wanted to become a poet and wrote her first poem, about her baby brother.

Marilyn's father was often the only black officer on a base, and it was not unusual for her and her siblings to be the only black children in their classes at school. Their determination to prove themselves and the support of their mother, who was a teacher, led them to excel as students. "Jennifer and I were studious to the point of bookishness," she recalls, "though I was more of a tomboy than she was. We rode bicycles, roller-skated, caught frogs and lizards, and climbed trees. My knees and elbows are permanently scarred from being skinned so often."

EARLY MEMORIES

Some of Nelson's most vivid childhood memories involve displays of racial prejudice. She remembers her father being stopped by a white highway

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patrolman one New Year's Eve as he drove the family to Mexico. The patrolman pointed his flashlight directly at her father's face and said, "What do you think you're flying, boy?" Her father, who was wearing his uniform, responded with great dignity, "B-52s" —the type of plane he flew for the Air Force. "The policeman looked shocked," Nelson recalls, "then laughed and said, 'Well, I guess you know what you're doing, then. But please be careful.' They exchanged New Year's wishes and waved as we drove away."

Another incident involved Marilyn and her best friend, Helene, whose father had also been a cadet at Tuskegee Institute. "We were walking in another neighborhood of base housing when a little white girl called us the N-word. Helene said, 'What did you say?' The girl repeated the word. Helene hauled off and hit her with her fist, right in the middle of her forehead. A big lump formed. Then Helene and I walked on home."

EDUCATION

Because the family moved so often, Nelson attended several different elementary schools. One of her best experiences came in Kittery Point, Maine. It was her sixth grade teacher who first encouraged her to write and who predicted on the last day of class that she would become a famous author some day.

At Burns Flat High School in Burns Flat, Oklahoma, where Nelson attended seventh, eighth, and part of ninth grade, she was one of only three black students. "Two of the teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Purdy, resented my presence in their classrooms," Nelson explains. "Though my grades were excellent, Mr. Purdy gave me a D in math. I went home in tears." When she told her father about it, he told her, "Just do the work and be proud."

The situation was very different at Hiram Johnson High School in Sacramento, California, where there were many black students. Nelson felt out of place there because she "talked white" and was so studious. She assumed that she would be put in the accelerated classes, but this was not the usual procedure for African-American students. The school administrators finally changed their minds in her senior year, when her father demanded to know why his daughter—a straight-A student—was not being placed in more challenging classes.

After graduation from high school in 1964, Nelson went to the University of California at Davis and again found herself in the minority, as one of five black students in a population of 12,000. She thought she wanted to be a doctor, but then found herself one day in a zoology class taking notes that rhymed. She changed her major to English. Upon graduating in 1968, she was given a fellowship to the University of Pennsylvania. She completed her master's degree (M.A.) there in 1970. Nine years later, in 1979, she received her doctorate (Ph.D.) in English from the University of Minnesota.

Throughout her college years, Nelson participated in a range of student groups. She was very active in the civil rights movement, demonstrated on behalf of migrant farm workers, and protested the Vietnam War. She helped organize the Black Students' Union at the University of California at Davis, and she even represented her campus at a university-wide arts conference, where she read some of her poems.

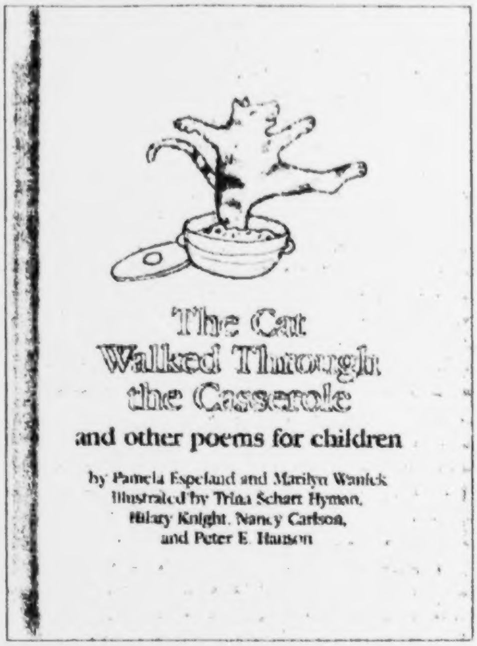
"*I wrote most of the poems in this book by getting up before dawn and writing for the hour or two before Jacob woke up. . . . I hoped* **Mama's Promises** *would be read as a book of black feminist theology. I wanted to proclaim a 'Mama' God, a black working-mother God, whose stress might be greater than my own . . . and who might be too wrung-out . . . to answer our prayers.*"

BECOMING A WRITER

After completing her M.A., Nelson worked as a housemother and counselor for Lutheran students at Cornell University. From there she went to Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon, where she taught English for two years. In 1970 she married Erdmann Waniek, who was working on his Ph.D. at the University of Oregon. Because he was German and had to leave the country after finishing his degree, the two young scholars went off to teach for a year at the Norre Nissum Seminarium in Denmark. They returned to the U.S. when they were offered jobs at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, where they remained for five years and where Nelson worked on her Ph.D.

They took a semester off in 1977 to teach at the University of Hamburg. When they returned from Germany, Nelson began to think more seriously about writing poetry — something she hadn't done since she was a college student. She remembered a letter she had received from her great-Uncle Rufus. "Why is it that young poets nowadays don't write poems people like me can understand?" he'd asked her. The question had stayed with her for a long time, and she found herself wondering why people like Uncle Rufus, who had a master's degree and was a college president, felt this way about poetry. "I hadn't written anything in ten years," she says. "I just started writing again."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

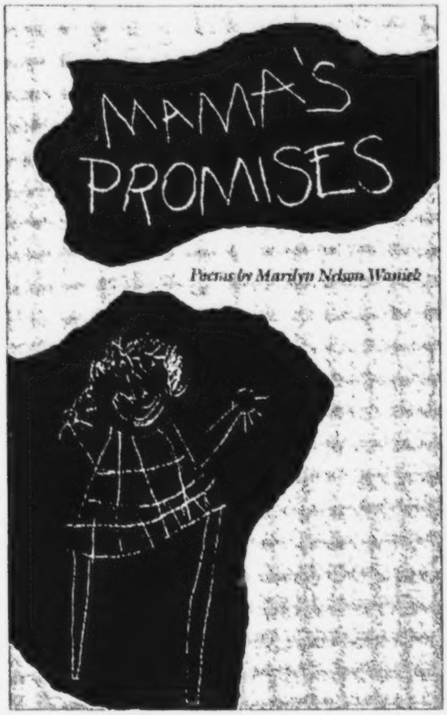

The Cat Walked Through the Casserole
and other poems for children
by Pamela Espeland and Marilyn Waniek
Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman,
Hilary Knight, Nancy Carlson,
and Peter E. Hanson

Nelson left Minnesota and took a teaching job at the University of Connecticut at Storrs in 1978. By the end of her first year teaching there, she had completed her Ph.D. and had published her first book of poems, *From the Body,* written for adults. Most of the poems in this book were autobiographical, the "body" in the title referring not just to the physical body but serving as a metaphor for the poet's family. They were written in free verse — that is, without rhyme or meter — and in short lines that put more emphasis on each individual word. "Like most first-book poets," Nelson later told an interviewer, "I expected my first book to catapult me to the stars. What it did instead was make me want to be a better writer."

As she started accumulating poems for a second volume, Nelson tried her hand at writing poems for children, something that had interested her ever since she'd first encountered the "wonderfully funny" works of the Danish poet Halfdan Rasmussen. With the help of her friend Pamela Espeland, she started translating Rasmussen's poems. The result was *Hundreds of Hens and Other Poems for Children,* published in 1982. Two years later she and Espeland published a book of their own verse for children called *The Cat Walked Through the Casserole and Other Poems for Children.* "I've learned a lot about what makes kids laugh," Nelson said in 1990. "Once, as I read the last line of a poem, a third-grader literally laughed until he fell out of his chair! I consider that one of my greatest successes."

Mama's Promises and *The Homeplace*

Nelson's second book of poetry for adults, *Mama's Promises,* was written after the birth of her first child in 1980. "I wrote most of the poems in this book by getting up before dawn and writing for the hour or two before Jacob woke up," she explains. Not surprisingly, many of them are about mothers and children. "I hoped *Mama's Promises* would be read as a book of black feminist theology," Nelson says. "I wanted to proclaim a 'Mama' God, a black working-mother God, whose stress might be greater than my own . . . and who might be too wrung-out . . . to answer our prayers." When



it was published in 1985, however, many readers read it as simply a book about being a first-time mother.

The Homeplace (1990), Nelson's third book of poems for adults, delved more deeply into her own family history. It was written at a time when her mother was suffering from Alzheimer's disease, and perhaps this is what drove Nelson to tell stories about her mother's family in Hickman, Kentucky, and about her father's "other" family, the Tuskegee Airmen. The resulting poems, some of which were written in African-American dialect, revealed Nelson's skill in writing formal verse, particularly sonnets. "The poet charts her family's survival in the face of oppression and racial injustice through carefully selected details and an even-handed tone that avoids emotionalism and elevates personal history to universal experience," *Publishers Weekly* said, drawing attention to her "skillful interweaving of dialect, quotations, and first-person narration" and to her "matter-of-fact, unadorned speech." *The Homeplace* was a finalist for the 1991 National Book Award, a prestigious award in American literature.

Hitting Her Stride

Nelson's next book, *Magnificat* (1994), is a narrative made up of individual poems about a young man whom she'd known in college. Their first meeting was memorable: he'd kissed her hand and told her he would never stop loving her, even though they barely knew each other at the time. They later became friends, but then lost touch for 20 years. It took Nelson a year to find out that he had become a Benedictine monk who was now living as a hermit. She studied Catholic theology and even spent time at a small Benedictine community in Vermont to prepare herself for seeing him again. *Magnificat* includes a sequence of prayers and stories about what happened when she visited him in his hermitage as well as poems about her own personal struggle with faith.

The Fields of Praise: New and Selected Poems gathered the best of Nelson's earlier work and combined it in one volume that also featured new poems.

The collection included poems on such themes as motherhood, marriage, racism, and religion. Published in 1997, it became a critical success. As Miller Williams wrote in *African American Review*, "In a quietly lyrical voice, Marilyn Nelson writes poems of simple wisdom and straightforward, indelible stories. Reading her poems is remarkably like sitting in a porch swing listening to a cousin who pays attention tell about a trip to the city, except that we hear instead about being transported to a slave market. . . . [Poetry is] at its best when [it seems] almost to be plain conversation. These poems are far from transcribed conversation—no one talks with the rhythmic power with which Nelson writes—but in the reading one can almost believe, comes to believe, that what pretends to be a poem is really a piece of conversation. That's how intimately connected Nelson's poems are to the world we live in. . . . She has a way of grabbing hold of the reader, almost as if she were a writer of suspense fiction. These are real people in real binds, and it would be damned difficult to close the book and leave them there." *The Fields of Praise: New and Selected Poems* was a big critical success: it was a finalist for the National Book Award and won the 1999 Poets' Prize.

Carver: A Life in Poems

Despite such awards, there were still very few people outside the poetry world who had ever heard Marilyn Nelson's name. Her next book, *Carver: A Life in Poems* (2001), changed all that. Nelson was actually in the process of beginning a different book of poems, about a 12th-century German nun. Then she was visited by a former Air Force officer who had served with her father. He had just visited the George Washington Carver National Monument, and he told Nelson that she should write a book of poems about him. So she did. Nelson did extensive research on Carver and his achievements before sitting down to write. "I did not intend this to be a book for children," she later said. "I wrote the poems as I always do, striving for clarity and truthfulness, imagining an audience of grown-ups." But

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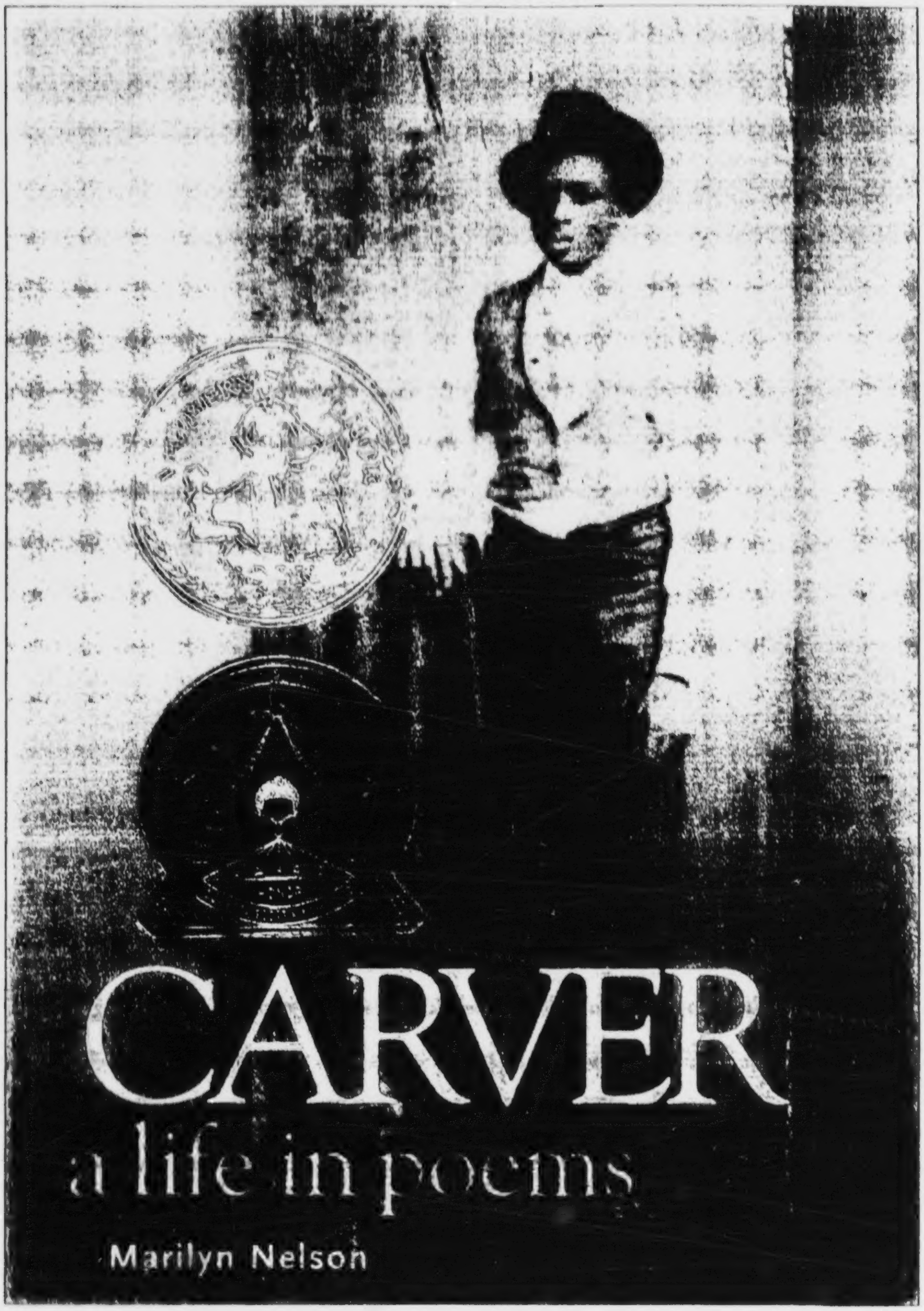
to Nelson's delight, the publisher suggested that the book should be targeted to young adults.

Carver: A Life in Poems tells the story of George Washington Carver, the African-American botanist, inventor, and painter who devoted his life to reducing poverty among black farmers by developing new uses for soil-replenishing crops, such as peanuts and sweet potatoes. Carver was born into a family of slaves in 1864 and was raised by a childless white couple. He ended up going to college, getting a master's degree, and establishing the agriculture department at Tuskegee Institute. In a series of 59 poems, some of them illustrated with black and white photographs, Nelson portrayed Carver as a visionary who never "thought like a slave" and who revolutionized agricultural development in the South.

> *"Whether she is tracing history with her wonderful insights into the Tuskegee Airmen and George Washington Carver, or recounting the harried day of a mother/professor/wife/poet, you hear a warm and vital American voice in all of Marilyn's work."*
> *—Susan Holmes, University of Connecticut*

Nelson's efforts to appeal to a wide audience paid off: the poems in *Carver: A Life in Poems* can be understood and appreciated by readers of all ages. "The poems are simple, sincere, and sometimes so beautiful they seem not works of artifice, but honest statements of pure, natural truths. . . . The book will undoubtedly encourage some young people to learn more about this remarkable man," commented Herman Sutter in *School Library Journal*. Critics praised the poems as compelling, lyrical, and beautiful. "Yes, it is nonfiction, and it is biography, and it is history, and it is drama. But above all it is poetry," Cathryn M. Mercier wrote in *Horn Book*. "Individually, each poem is a whole unto itself—each an immersion into image and metaphor, recognition and vision, sight and sound. As a gathering, the poems limn [depict] one man's life as well lived through teaching, painting, and dreaming." Herbert Woodward Martin wrote in *African American Review* that "The magic of the craft is invisible and awe-inspiring. The voice is natural, and one cannot detect the slightest hint of falseness in a single line of this poem. The control over craft and thought is invigorating. . . . Marilyn Nelson has created a marvelous 'life in poems' in this book-length biography. There are a variety of elements that recommend it. There is voice and music; there is speech,



both written and spoken; there is devotion and commitment; there is the confrontation of the real world; there is the embrace of the imagined and artistic world; but, above all, there is the vision of George Washington Carver fully drawn and realized in poetry." Other critics agreed with these

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words of praise. *Carver: A Life in Poems* won the *Boston Globe/Horn Book* Award and was a National Book Award finalist, a Newbery Honor Book, and a Coretta Scott King Honor Book.

Poet Laureate of Connecticut

In 2001, Nelson was appointed Poet Laureate of Connecticut, a post she will hold for five years. As explained by Susan Holmes, who nominated Nelson and who directs the artistic programs at the University of Connecticut, "Whether she is tracing history with her wonderful insights into the Tuskegee Airmen and George Washington Carver, or recounting the harried day of a mother/professor/wife/poet, you hear a warm and vital American voice in all of Marilyn's work." As the first woman and the first African-American to hold the Connecticut post, Nelson hopes to establish an artists' colony where young African-American writers can come to write.

Nelson's work is considered very accessible, which makes her ideally suited to the post of Poet Laureate. That view is echoed by Andy Thibault of the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, who considers Nelson "a warm, humble person" who is "attuned to the need to reach out to different audiences. She's not an elitist; her poems are not written for other poets." Nelson herself describes her poetry as "simple, straightforward, and I hope thought-provoking, resonant, and deep. But I also hope my poetry is understandable, at least on the most obvious level. Poetry has lots of layers, but on the surface I want my poems to create images and scenes in people's minds. . . . I don't believe you should need a Ph.D. to understand poetry."

"

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"

In addition to her service as Poet Laureate, Nelson published *Triolets for Triolet* in 2001. This is a collection of short poems produced in the form of an illustrated chapbook, which is a small book or pamphlet. The word "Triolet" has two meanings: it is the name of a French poetic form with a specific pattern of rhymes and repeated lines, and it is also the name of a Creole village on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Nelson had visited the village of Triolet while doing research, and she decided to donate the proceeds from the sale of the book to a literacy program there.

Nelson's work continues to probe the African-American experience. She is currently at work on a book of poems that she describes as a pilgrimage book, "a kind of African-American 'take' on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*." She is also working on a poem about a Revolutionary War slave named Fortune. In addition, Nelson and her brother, who is a composer, are collaborating on a piece for the Waterbury (Connecticut) Symphony that will be performed in 2003.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

In 1970 Marilyn Nelson married Erdmann Waniek; they divorced in 1979. After that she married Roger Wilkenfeld, with whom she has two children: Jacob, born in 1980, and Dora, born in 1986. She and Wilkenfeld were divorced in 1998. Nelson lives in Storrs, Connecticut, near the university, where she teaches creative writing and American ethnic literature.

MAJOR INFLUENCES

As a girl, Nelson was influenced by the Harlem Renaissance poet, novelist, and playwright Langston Hughes, who was born in 1902. His ability to write not only about the oppression but about the resilience and determination of the African-American people has been an ongoing inspiration for Nelson's poems, which, she says, "are celebrations of victories over adversity."

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Nelson's hobby is quilting, although she rarely has time to pursue it now that she is her state's poet laureate.

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SELECTED WRITINGS

Note: The author wrote under the name Marilyn Nelson Waniek until 1995; since then she has written under the name Marilyn Nelson.

For the Body, 1978
The Cat Walked Through the Casserole and Other Poems for Children, 1984 (with Pamela Espeland; written for children)
Mama's Promises, 1985
The Homeplace, 1990
Magnificat, 1994
The Fields of Praise: New and Selected Poems, 1997
Carver: A Life in Poems, 2001
Triolets for Triolet, 2001

SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

Kent Fellow (Danforth Foundation): 1976
Creative Writing Fellowship (National Endowment for the Arts): 1981, 1990
Connecticut Arts Award: 1990
Anisfield-Wolf Book Award (The Cleveland Foundation): 1992, for *The Homeplace*
Fulbright Fellowship: 1995
Poets' Prize (Nicholas Roerich Museum): 1999, for *The Fields of Praise: New and Selected Poems*
Commander's Award for Public Service (Department of the Army): 2000
Guggenheim Fellowship: 2001
Boston Globe/Horn Book Award for Excellence in Children's Literature: 2001, for *Carver: A Life in Poems*
Flora Stieglitz Straus Award (Bank Street College of Education): 2001, for *Carver: A Life in Poems*
Poet Laureate of Connecticut, 2001
Notable Children's Book (American Library Association): 2002, for *Carver: A Life in Poems*
Best Book for Young Adults (American Library Association): 2002, for *Carver: A Life in Poems*
Connecticut Book Award in Poetry (Connecticut Center for the Book): 2002, for *Carver: A Life in Poems*

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Contemporary Authors New Revision Series, Vol. 51

Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 120, 1992
Directory of American Scholars, 10th ed., 2001
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Boston Globe, Nov. 24, 2002, p.B10
Hartford (Conn.) Courant, Jan. 6, 2002, p.H1: June 29, 2001, p.D3
Horn Book, Jan.-Feb. 2002, p.41
New York Times, Nov. 11, 2001, Section 14CN, p.6

Online Databases

Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, article from *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 1992

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WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

http://www.ucc.uconn.edu/~waniek/
http://www.ctarts.org/PoetLaureate.htm
http://www.poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?prmID=98
http://www.frontstreetbooks.com

Tamora Pierce 1954-

American Writer for Young Adults
Author of the Fantasy Series "Song of the Lioness," "The Circle of Magic," and "The Protector of the Small"

BIRTH

Tamora Pierce was born on December 13, 1954, in Connellsville, Pennsylvania. She is the oldest daughter of Wayne Franklin Pierce and Jacqueline S. Pierce. Tamora (which is pronounced like "camera") has two sisters: Kimberly, who is five years younger, and Melanie, who is six years younger.

YOUTH

Pierce had a very difficult childhood. As the daughter of divorced and abusive parents, she faced many challenges as a child and teenager. In addition to family fighting, her family was poor and at times had to rely on extended family and friends to survive. That situation was made worse by her parents' divorce when she was 12. Before the divorce, Pierce said, their lifestyle was "blue collar, strictly lower class income. Once they split up, it got worse. From ninth grade on we were on welfare."

Because of her parents' marital problems and her family's poor financial situation, Pierce spent much of her early years moving around from town to town. From Pennsylvania, her birthplace, they moved in 1963 to California, where the family lived in four different houses and she attended six different schools. When her parents broke up, her mother took her back to Pennsylvania. There she attended two different schools, and the family lived first in a four-room house with no indoor plumbing and later in a single hotel room.

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"I was a daddy's girl, or rather, for a long time I was the oldest son. My parents didn't have any boys, and my dad enjoyed teaching me things that were usually relegated to boys in that day and age (the late 1950s and early 1960s). He took me fishing, let me help build his model railroad layout that he put up every Christmas, and interested me in his favorite books."

"

A Father's Encouragement, a Mother's Criticism

Both Wayne and Jacqueline Pierce were abusive to their children. But Tamora later came to understand that her father's temper was caused by traumas he had suffered while fighting in Korea, and she had a better relationship with her father than with her mother. "I was a daddy's girl," she recalled, "or rather, for a long time I was the oldest son. My parents didn't have any boys, and my dad enjoyed teaching me things that were usually relegated to boys in that day and age (the late 1950s and early 1960s). He took me fishing, let me help build his model railroad layout that he put up every Christmas, and interested me in his favorite books."

Pierce credited her father with getting her interested in writing in the sixth grade. "He caught me telling stories to myself as I did dishes (I had the idea that I could program my dreams) and suggested that I write a book instead. I had no idea it was supposed to be hard, and I adored my dad, so I just asked him what I ought to write about. As I mentioned, he shared his books with me, so he knew what I liked. He suggested that the book be about travels in a time machine." She used her father's manual typewriter and was soon hooked on writing stories.

> *"I was a major dweebie for the most part: read too much, was lousy at sports, was too loud, too clumsy, related better to my teachers than my peers, dressed funny, didn't have the right hair/glasses/makeup skills (okay, I had no makeup skills), was completely out of step on music, movies, and television."*

Pierce's relationship with her mother was more problematic. Pierce described Jacqueline Pierce as a very intelligent woman who went to college and intended to be an English teacher. When Tamora's father moved the family from Pennsylvania to California for a job, however, tensions and long-standing arguments exploded between husband and wife. Her parents divorced, they waged an ugly custody battle in court, and her mother won custody of the children. After that, things became worse as Jacqueline Pierce descended into alcoholism. While her father had been an affirming voice in Tamora's life, her mother became hurtful, envious, and destructive. "A brush with child welfare made her stop hitting me (though not my sisters, later)," she said, "but emotionally she could grind a person down. She hated my writing and always had something to say about it that made me feel bad. When she found out I'd submitted a story to *Seventeen* magazine when I was 15 . . . she blew up over my presumption at thinking myself good enough to be published. I didn't write any original fiction for five years after that."

A "Dweebie" Lover of Books

Despite her mother's criticism of her writing, Pierce still found reading to be a comfort, a way to escape from her world. It was also, as she explained, "an introduction to what the rest of the world and time itself had to offer. This is also why fantasy is the genre that speaks the most strongly to me." Pierce became a fan of J. R. R. Tolkien, as well as other fantasy authors, and of the science fiction writers Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury, Frank Herbert, and James Blish. She also enjoyed such old adventure stories as Alexandre Dumas's *The Three Musketeers,* Baroness Orczy's *The Scarlet Pimpernel,* and classics like *The Arabian Nights.*

As a teenager, Pierce often felt like an outsider. Because her family moved around so much, it was hard for Pierce to make friends and fit in. "I was a major dweebie for the most part: read too much, was lousy at sports, was too loud, too clumsy, related better to my teachers than my peers, dressed funny, didn't have the right hair/glasses/makeup skills (okay, I had *no* makeup skills), was completely out of step on music, movies, and television."

Pierce eventually became more confident and sure of herself in high school and college, and it was while in college that she finally escaped from her mother's emotionally crippling influence.

EDUCATION

The family's poverty and frequent moves made Pierce's school years very difficult. In fact, she attended 11 schools by the time she finished high school. Pierce attended Albert Gallatin Senior High, which she described as "an okay place to be. By then the kids were beginning to realize the old cliques just didn't work anymore, and I was actually a very peripheral member of the in crowd there by the end of my junior year. Poverty wasn't as big a deal at Gallatin because a lot of the kids lived on farms, and they didn't have much either."

Senior year was tough on Pierce because at that time the family was living in a hotel room in Uniontown. Pierce then attended Uniontown Area Senior High School, where she continued to be a terrific student in English class, her favorite subject, as well as in foreign languages and social studies. On the other hand, she couldn't handle math, science, and physical education. "I was a klutz and slow, though I loved archery and folk dancing," she said. She found solace from her English teachers and librarians, who, unlike her mother, encouraged her writing and steered her toward good reading material. This proved extremely important to her mental and emotional health, as she later said: "I think I might have been a total basket case if I hadn't been able to remind myself that people I respected thought I was valuable in my own right." For extracurricular activities she enjoyed singing in the chorus and performing in school plays. She also wrote articles—often with a satirical tone—for the school paper, was in the National Honor Society, and won the "Voice of Democracy" essay contest.

Song of the Lioness · Book II
In the Hand of the Goddess
Tamora Pierce

College Years

Pierce was such an outstanding student in high school that she was able to win a full scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. Discouraged by her mother from pursuing writing as a career, she thought a great deal about what else she could study at the university. She recalled her experiences with social workers during her parents' custody battle over the children (Pierce and her sisters had to live in a group home for a few weeks), and she remembered how impressed she had been by these caring people. She therefore decided to study psychology.

While she was in college, Pierce made another important decision — to cut off her relationship with her mother. When her mother moved to Philadelphia to be closer to Pierce, bringing her two younger daughters with her, the situation among all four of them became explosive. Her sisters "ran away," according to Pierce, "Kim to my dad and his new wife, Melanie to group homes, and when my mother threw me out, I stayed thrown. It was horrible to see someone so smart trash her life like my mother did, and all three of us girls vowed we wouldn't let it happen to us."

A much more positive experience for Pierce came through one of her classes at the university. Still harboring a love for writing, she managed to fit a fiction writing class into her senior year schedule. The teacher for the course was novelist and screen writer David Bradley. This supportive teacher believed in her ability to become an author and urged her to write a novel based on her dramatic life experiences. "I tried to write that book, but could only manage five pages," Pierce remembered. "Terrified that my writing would evaporate again, I decided that it didn't matter what my first novel was about, as long as it was a *complete* first novel. I asked myself what I'd been writing about, back when writing had been as easy as breathing. The answer was simple: fantasy with teenaged girl heroes. Thus I began my first sword and sorcery novel, and finished it six months later. It wasn't very good, but it was novel length, and that's what mattered."

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Pierce completed her bachelor of arts degree (B.A.) in 1977. However, because she was so bad at math she failed her statistics course, a requirement for a degree in psychology. Her B.A. is therefore a general degree in the arts — "just don't ask me what the degree's *in*," she said wryly.

BECOMING A WRITER

After college, Pierce had difficulty finding work that suited her. She jumped from job to job, just taking positions that helped pay her rent. She moved to New York City and worked as a tax data collector and tax clerk. Struggling to earn enough money to live and attending therapy sessions for depression, she relieved some of the stress by sitting down and writing a full-length adult novel she titled *The Song of the Lioness*, the story of a girl named Alanna who wants to be a knight. She was working on rewrites when, in 1978, her father and stepmother asked her to move to their home in Buhl, Idaho.

> ***"Having stumbled into writing for teenagers, I've learned that I love it, and I plan to keep doing it. When a kid tells you that your books have made a difference in her or his life, you truly have something to be proud of."***

While she was in Idaho, Pierce found a job that actually used some of her knowledge and training in social work: she was hired as a housemother for a group home for troubled teenage girls. Pierce revealed to the girls that she was trying to get her first novel published, and they eagerly asked her to read it to them. "They would come running home each day, saying 'Pierce, Pierce, tell us more about Alanna!'" Pierce obliged them, but when the director of the group home found out that the novel contained references to drugs and sex she was prohibited from reading it. "Instead, I told the story (omitting the objectionable parts), every day after school, and every night before bedtime, at the girls' request."

Pierce soon burned out on this very demanding job. In 1979 she left the group home and returned to New York City so she could be closer to the publishing industry there. She found a new literary agent and worked at a number of odd jobs, including reading romance manuscripts for the publisher Silhouette, reviewing martial arts movies (one of her favorite movie genres), and being an assistant literary agent for Harold Ober Associates. One of the agents there, Claire Smith, took a look at Pierce's manuscript and suggested that she break up her lengthy novel into four separate books

and rewrite it so that it was more suitable for a young adult audience. Pierce said that having already reworked it when she was telling the story to the girls in the group home, "I realized that, in a sense, I already had." The result would become her first fantasy quartet, "Song of the Lioness."

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The 1980s were a promising decade for Pierce, as her publishing dreams were beginning to come true. But even though her first novel, *Alanna: The First Adventure,* was published in 1983, this success didn't mean she could quit the workaday world and become a full-time author. From 1982 to 1988 she was a director for ZPPR Productions, which produced radio programs, and from 1985 to 1989 she was also a secretary for Chase Investment Bank. Still, things were looking up for Pierce as she finally was gaining confidence and recognition as a writer.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Since the 1980s, Pierce has written several series of fantasy novels for young adults. These novels tend to share certain characteristics. In each series, Pierce succeeds in creating a complicated, fully-realized imaginary world that feels real to her readers. Her fantasy series often feature female heroines, usually teenage girls. These are stubborn, strong-willed, adventurous girls who are determined to avoid the restrictions of traditional female roles, and their exploits encourage that sense of independence and daring among her young readers.

Pierce didn't set out to write for young adult readers, though she soon came to love her teenage audience. "Having stumbled into writing for teenagers, I've learned that I love it, and I plan to keep doing it. When a kid tells you that your books have made a difference in her or his life, you truly have something to be proud of." Pierce was once asked, "What in particular do you like about teenagers?" She responded, "Their energy. Their enthusiasm, their passion. Their idealism, their sense that the world could be made a better place. They aren't ashamed of their dreams. They're funny, adventurous, and royal pains in the neck. I like that in a person. . . . Teenagers are the perfect friends for a writer." In these respects, her character Alanna is just like today's teenagers.

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"Song of the Lioness"

Pierce's first series for young adults, The "Song of the Lioness," includes four novels: *Alanna: The First Adventure* (1983), *In the Hand of the Goddess* (1984), *The Woman Who Rides Like a Man* (1986), and *Lioness Rampant* (1988). This series is about Alanna of Trebond, a strong-willed girl living in a medieval-like society where women are not allowed to become warriors and are usually fated to be either wives or nuns. In *Alanna: The First Adventure*, she decides she wants to be a knight instead of a lady. Fortunately for her, her twin brother, Thom, who is supposed to become a knight, wants to train to be a mage. The siblings agree to switch identities. Thom forges their father's signature, and Alanna becomes "Alan." Despite her slight build, Alanna shows courage that wins the respect of Prince Jonathan, whom she later saves from illness by using her healing magic. Together, the two struggle through various adversities, but Alanna wonders what will happen if anyone discovers that she's a girl.

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> *"In life we know people over years or even decades. Series books enable writers to get some of that feel to the reader's acquaintance with characters: as in life, we follow their doings over time and through periods where they behave better than during others. Some critics argue that sticking to the same characters over several books is 'safe': it is just about as safe as real life, when people you know change, growing away from you or closer."*
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> "

In the Hand of the Goddess, the second book in the series, tells how Alanna continues her education to become a knight, goes to war, battles the evil Duke Roger's plans to steal the throne from Jonathan, meets the Great Mother Goddess, and falls in love. Leaving knighthood behind, Alanna ventures off to the desert where she encounters a nomadic tribe called the Bazhir in *The Woman Who Rides Like a Man*. Although she no longer conceals her gender, she wins the respect of the Bazhir for her warrior and magic skills and becomes the tribe's wizard. By the last installment of the series, *Lioness Rampant*, Alanna has become a legendary figure. Here she must seek the Dominion Jewel, a magical object that can be used for good magic, which she'll need in her struggle for the kingdom.

"The Immortals"

Pierce used the fantasy world she had created in the "Song of the Lioness" as the setting for her next quartet of books, "The Immortals." This series includes *Wild Magic* (1992), *Wolf-Speaker* (1994), *The Emperor Mage* (1995), and *The Realms of the Gods* (1996). Some of the characters from the previous series, including Alanna, also make appearances, but the main character in "The Immortals" is Daine, a 13-year-old girl who discovers that she has a magical connection with animals. With these special gifts, she must learn to control her abilities as she comes of age. In the first book, *Wild Magic,* Daine is hired to work in the stables of the Queen's Riders. Here she becomes a student to Numair, gains skill in communicating with and even healing animals, and participates in defending the kingdom of Tortall against an army consisting of the Immortals—dragons, griffins, and imaginary creatures created by Pierce, like spidrens, hurrocks, and Stormwings—who are under the control of evil humans.

The other three books in the series, *Wolf-Speaker, The Emperor Mage,* and *The Realms of the Gods,* continue Daine's adventures as she develops new powers such as shape-shifting. She also adds a growing number of interesting creatures to her list of friends, including a curious dragon named Kitten and a resourceful marmoset named Zek. Together, they battle wicked wizards and nefarious emperors in adventures that readers find satisfying and appealing.

The "Circle" Books

With "The Circle of Magic" quartet, Pierce left behind her first magical world to create a new universe in which magic operates through the skill of craftsmanship in various arts such as metalwork and weaving. The books feature four friends from different backgrounds who learn how to work magic while studying at the temple city of Winding Circle. As indicat-

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ed by the titles—*Sandry's Book* (1996), *Tris's Book* (1998), *Daja's Book* (1998), and *Briar's Book* (1999)—each novel in the series focuses on one of the four characters, though they are all tied together by their need to survive and by friendship. Sandry, the orphaned daughter of nobles, learns to work magic with thread; Tris, who becomes a weather mage, is the daughter of a merchant who doesn't want her in his life; Daja lost her family when they died at sea and learns to work magic by forging metals; and Briar is a street-smart kid who has survived by stealing, but he learns a more constructive way of life through the magic of growing plants. The four young apprentices are taught by four mages—Rosethorn, Frostpine, Niko, and Lark—who are repeatedly surprised by the way their students work together to overcome seemingly impossible obstacles.

Pierce brings her four characters back in "The Circle Opens" quartet, which includes *Magic Steps* (2000), *Street Magic* (2000), *Cold Fire* (2002), and *Shatterglass* (2003). This series opens four years after Sandry, Tris, Daja, and Briar have left Winding Circle to journey to various parts of the world and study their craft in depth with their mentors. Following the same pattern as the first books, each installment of "The Circle Opens" features one of the four main characters as they continue to mature and grow, and as they take on students of their own. In *Magic Steps* Sandry encounters a 12-year-old boy named Pasco whose magic works through dance. Sandry must try to instruct the stubborn Pasco as the two of them work to solve a series of murders. *Street Magic* features Briar, who discovers a girl named Evvy whose magic works through stones and crystals. Briar tries to locate another stone mage to instruct Evvy, while at the same time finding himself in a street gang war. New problems come to the forefront in *Cold Fire*. Here, Daja is concerned with teaching two young student apprentices how to control their woodworking and cooking magic, but the bigger issue is a series of fires that are causing deaths on the islands of Kugisko. Daja works with Bennat Ladradun, a heroic figure with whom she begins to fall in love, in solving the mystery. And finally, in *Shatterglass*, a glassworker named Kethlun Warder thinks that his career is over after he is struck by lightning. But Tris shows him that he has become a rare mage whose skills combine both glass and lightning, which is a gift that might help Tris and her mentor, Niko, find a serial killer.

"The Protector of the Small"

Readers have also enjoyed the "The Protector of the Small" series, which includes *First Test* (1999), *Page* (2000), *Squire* (2001), and *Lady Knight* (2002). In this quartet Pierce once again returns to the world of Alanna, though the books feature a new heroine: Keladry of Mindelan. Kel wants to be just like Alanna and become a knight. Although the king has decreed that girls can become knights, she still meets with a great deal of chauvinism from teachers and fellow students alike. *First Test* and *Page* are about how Kel meets her first challenges to control her anger when Lord Wyldon insists that girls go through a year's probationary period and when she witnesses older pages picking on smaller ones. She also has to manage her fear, when she must overcome her fear of heights in order to continue her training.

Squire deals with the wider range of emotions that Kel experiences, from her disappointment at not being selected as Alanna's squire to her budding romantic feelings and challenges in raising a stubborn baby griffin. And with *Lady Knight* the young Kel makes her debut as a full knight of the realm. Her first assignment, however, is less than thrilling as Lord Wyldon puts her in charge of a refugee camp. Though Kel realizes that this is a serious assignment to help people in need, she also knows that her camp work is keeping her from fulfilling her destiny.

Finding Success

Overall, Pierce has received good reviews of her many books, as well as an especially loyal fan following. Critics have been particularly impressed with the author's female

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characters. For example, *Horn Book* reviewer Ann A. Flowers, writing about *Wild Magic,* said that Pierce deftly portrays the growth of her character Daine, who is "a strong heroine whose humble beginning makes her well-deserved rewards even more gratifying." And *School Library Journal* reviewer Patricia A. Dollisch remarked in a review of *Squire* that "the author has created a strong female protagonist who accomplishes her goals with her integrity, sense of humor, and her self-esteem intact."

But despite this positive reception, Pierce was not able to make a comfortable living at writing until very recently. "Things were pretty lean until 1997," she said, "when Random House brought [eight of my books] . . . out in paperback editions and I began to do well in the U.S. and Canada." She gratefully acknowledges the "librarians and English teachers [who] kept me in print while I struggled for notice." She also says that "My success is due to my readers, adults and kids, and I love being able to thank them."

> *"Write what makes you happy. Write what makes you want to write more. Write to please yourself first, because you may be the only audience you have for years and years. Listen to what other people tell you, because there may be something in what they say that's useful, but learn also to trust in your own instincts about your writing. Write the kind of thing you like to read."*

Writing Series Books

Pierce is a big fan of series books, feeling that they give a better understanding and appreciation of characters. "In life we know people over years or even decades. Series books enable writers to get some of that feel to the reader's acquaintance with characters: as in life, we follow their doings over time and through periods where they behave better than during others. Some critics argue that sticking to the same characters over several books is 'safe': it is just about as safe as real life, when people you know change, growing away from you or closer."

Advice to Young Writers

Pierce shares this advice with aspiring writers: "Write what makes you happy. Write what makes you want to write *more*. Write to please yourself first, because you may be the only audience you have for years and years.

Listen to what other people tell you, because there may be something in what they say that's useful, but learn also to trust in your own instincts about your writing. Write the kind of thing you like to read. Try different kinds of writing, because each new form helps you to see your writing—and what you want to do with it—differently. So far I've written: stage plays, radio plays, screenplays (none that were made into movies, though), poetry (bad poetry!), articles, movie reviews, stories for women's magazines, all kinds of other short stories, articles about computer games. I've also worked as an editor, copyeditor and proofreader, which has been very useful. Helping other people sort out their mistakes teaches you how to avoid some of them yourself."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Pierce married Tim Liebe, a writer and actor whom she met in 1983. Liebe is now a freelance writer for consumer electronics magazines as well as a Web page designer. The couple lives in Manhattan in New York City, in a large apartment with four cats and two parakeets.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Pierce admits somewhat guiltily that she enjoys watching television, especially such shows as "E.R.," "The West Wing," and "NYDP Blue." Her other hobby is going to Central Park in New York City and feeding the birds and other animals that live there. "Yes, it's true," she said, "I am a Crazy Park Lady."

WRITINGS

"Song of the Lioness" Series

Alanna: The First Adventure, 1983
In the Hand of the Goddess, 1984
The Woman Who Rides Like a Man, 1986
Lioness Rampant, 1988

"The Immortals" Series

Wild Magic, 1992
Wolf-Speaker, 1994
The Emperor Mage, 1995
The Realms of the Gods, 1996

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"The Circle of Magic" Series

Sandry's Book, 1996
Tris's Book, 1998
Daja's Book, 1998
Briar's Book, 1999

"The Protector of the Small" Series

First Test, 1999
Page, 2000
Squire, 2001
Lady Knight, 2002

"The Circle Opens" Series

Magic Steps, 2000
Street Magic, 2000
Cold Fire, 2002
Shatterglass, 2003

HONORS AND AWARDS

Best Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror List (*Voice of Youth Advocates*): 1996, for *The Emperor Mage;* 1997, for *The Realms of the Gods;* 1998, for *Sandry's Book;* 1999, for *Daja's Book* and *Tris's Book;* 2000, for *Briar's Book;* 2001, for *Page* and *Magic Steps;* 2002, for *Squire*
Best Books for Young Adults List (American Library Association): 1996, for *The Emperor Mage;* 2002, for *Squire*
One of the Perfect Tens — Top 40 Books (*Voice of Youth Advocates*): 1996-2000, 2001, for *Daja's Book* and *Briar's Book*
Top 10 Fantasy Novels for Young Readers (*Booklist*): 1997-98, for *Sandry's Book* and *Daja's Book*
New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age: 1998, for *Daja's Book*
Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers (Young Adult Librarian Society of America): 1999, for *Tris's Book*
Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers (*Voice of Youth Advocates*): 2001, for *Street Magic*

FURTHER READING

Books

Authors & Artists for Young Adults, Vol. 26, 1999
Contemporary Authors, Vol. 118, 1986

Contemporary Authors New Revision Series, Vol. 69, 1999
Gallo, Donald R. *Speaking for Ourselves, Too: More Autobiographical Sketches by Notable Authors of Books for Young Adults*, 1993
Holtze, Sally Holmes. *Seventh Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators*, 1996
Something about the Author, Vol. 96, 1997
St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers, 1999
Twentieth-Century Young Adult Writers, 1994

Online Database

Biography Resource Center, 2002, articles from *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, 1999; *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2001; and *St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers*, 1999

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http://www.tamora-pierce.com
http://www.randomhousebooks.com/teens/tpierce.html

Virginia Euwer Wolff 1937-

American Writer for Young Adults
Author of *Probably Still Nick Swansen, Make Lemonade,*
and *True Believer*

BIRTH

Virginia Euwer Wolff was born on August 25, 1937, in Portland, Oregon. She is the daughter of the late Eugene Courtney Euwer, a lawyer who turned to farming, and Florence Euwer, a teacher who also became a farmer. Virginia was their second child, with one older brother.

YOUTH

Wolff began life in an idyllic setting. Not long after she was born, her father gave up his legal practice and bought a pear and apple orchard near Mt. Hood in Oregon. The family lived in a log home, and for the first five years of Wolff's life they enjoyed a happy existence in a beautiful setting. "From our backyard," she remembered, "we had a towering view of Mt. Hood, 11,235 feet high, with snow on it all year round. From our front lawn on a clear day we could see three more of the Cascades, including Mt. St. Helens." Although there was no electricity in the house, it contained many other delightful features: a beautiful stone fireplace, a grand piano, and lots of books. Among Wolff's favorite stories from the bookshelf were the Winnie-the-Pooh tales by A. A. Milne, which her mother read to her. "Mother read a lot of other things to us," she remembered, "but Milne's Pooh was the most comforting."

> *"Three things seem to have determined a lot of what I am and what I do. I'm a woods kid—you know, the forest. I'm Pacific Northwestern. Two, I play the violin. And three, my dad died when I was a little kid."*

This happy childhood world was destroyed in 1942 when Wolff's father died. "Suddenly," she said, "the world that had just the day before made sense to us went kerplooey." Despite losing her husband, Florence Euwer decided to remain on the orchard, keeping her family together in what she felt was a positive environment. She instilled in her children a love for the arts, especially music, and made sure they went to church and Sunday school every week. A church organist, she encouraged her daughter to take piano lessons at the age of seven, but Wolff soon abandoned the piano for another instrument. "I started violin lessons when I was eight," she recalled, "after one year of piano, so I knew how to read music when I got the violin."

By the time she was entering her teen years, Wolff had already experienced many of the things that would influence her throughout her life. "Three things seem to have determined a lot of what I am and what I do," she said. "I'm a woods kid—you know, the forest. I'm Pacific Northwestern. Two, I play the violin. And three, my dad died when I was a little kid."

EDUCATION

As Wolff was growing up, she always had a sense of being an outsider, and this had an important influence on the course her education would take.

As a grade school student, she felt like an outsider among the other school children because she had spent so much time isolated in the forested Oregon countryside and wasn't used to the way the other kids talked. One of the reasons she turned to the violin was to console herself within a world she understood better than the playground — the world of music.

Although she had trouble adjusting to social life in grade school, she was a good student, especially in English. In fifth grade, Wolff had a favorite teacher, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, whom she described as "a strange and gifted person. I thought she was wonderfully quirky and great. We were in this little rural town on the side of a mountain, and she taught us about the structure of English — whether we wanted to learn it or not. As it turns out, I was a perfect candidate for learning because I am in love with the English sentence."

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> *In fifth grade, Wolff had a favorite teacher, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, whom she described as "a strange and gifted person. I thought she was wonderfully quirky and great. We were in this little rural town on the side of a mountain, and she taught us about the structure of English — whether we wanted to learn it or not. As it turns out, I was a perfect candidate for learning because I am in love with the English sentence."*
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As a teenager, Wolff acknowledged, she became a very difficult daughter for her mother to control. Still affected by her father's death, she questioned her religious faith. Her mother was devoutly religious, and her daughter's questioning upset greatly. She concluded that the solution was to place her daughter into a more religious setting. "My mom was mad at me," Wolff recalled, "and stuck me in boarding school [when I was 16]." She added, "I was angry, I was hurt, I was a mess as a teenager." Sent to a remote Episcopal school, she was helped through her religious crisis by a kindly 29-year-old priest named Father Williams. "I was reaching for huge ideas about existence and about God," said Wolff, "and about good and evil. Father Williams was one of my enormously important mentors. I was rebelling from religion, but just loving the man who was bringing religion to me. So, in a way, I wasn't rebelling from religion at all. I was just asking a whole lot of questions."

Books also became an important influence when Wolff was a teenager, especially *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger. The story of the rebellious prep school student Holden Caulfield, *The Catcher in the Rye* is full of protestations against society's accepted norms from the viewpoint of a young man who feels he can never be just like everyone else. "I turned into a reader the summer of my 16th birthday," she said, "when I read *The Catcher in the Rye. The Catcher in the Rye* changed my life. . . . Somebody spoke for me." After she finished boarding school, Wolff decided to study English at Smith College. While at college she abandoned playing the violin because she didn't believe she could ever be good enough to become a professional. "I turned into a teacher and a writer because I wasn't enough of a violinist," she once revealed. Wolff completed her bachelor of arts degree (B.A.) in 1959. She later said that "In retrospect, I'm also extremely grateful for my Smith education, which taught me essentially what Maya Angelou says: 'Preparation is rarely easy, and never beautiful.'"

MARRIAGE AND FIRST JOBS

After finishing college, her life quickly became very busy. In 1959 Virginia Euwer married Art Wolff, a theater major whom she had met at Smith College, and she followed him from state to state as his work required. Soon she gave birth to two children, Anthony and Juliet. This inspired her to go into teaching because, as she said, "I decided I wanted to go to school with my kids." Wolff had already taught a year of junior-high-level English in the Bronx just after she left college, and she took up teaching again in 1968 after her children had grown up enough not to need constant care. She taught elementary school students at the Miquon School in Philadelphia from 1968 to 1972 and at the Fiedel School in Glen Cove, New York, from 1972 to 1974.

When her marriage unfortunately ended in divorce in 1976, Wolff moved back to her beloved Oregon, where she became an English teacher at Hood River Valley High School. By this time, however, she had already begun to explore the world of writing, but she had not yet experienced the great success that was to come.

BECOMING A WRITER

As an English teacher and self-confessed lover of "the English sentence," it is perhaps not surprising that Wolff would eventually try her hand at writing her own book. Teaching and parenting initially kept her too busy to find time to write. But when her son and daughter entered their teen years, she resolved to give it a shot. Her first book, *Rated PG*, was published in 1980 and marketed to adults, not young adults. "I had never taken a writing course," she confessed, "and I had never finished a short story. I just decided I would sit down and write a novel. You know 'where angels fear to tread.' I do everything 'where angels fear to tread.' I believe that's how our best writing gets done. I had a whole bunch of impulses and half-witted perceptions coming out of me, just coming out my ears, so I sat down and let stuff pour out onto the typewriter."

Rated PG is the story of a young woman who falls in love with an Ivy League college student. Although it received good reviews, Wolff was not happy with it and is today very glad that it has gone out of print. "I don't admire the book," she said. "I guess first novels are always embarrassing." However, she chalked it up as a learning experience and moved on. In 1986 she left her job at Hood River Valley High to take up teaching English at Mt. Hood Academy, a camp where athletes train for the Winter Olympics. Wolff continued to teach there until 1998, when she was able to quit her job and become a full-time writer.

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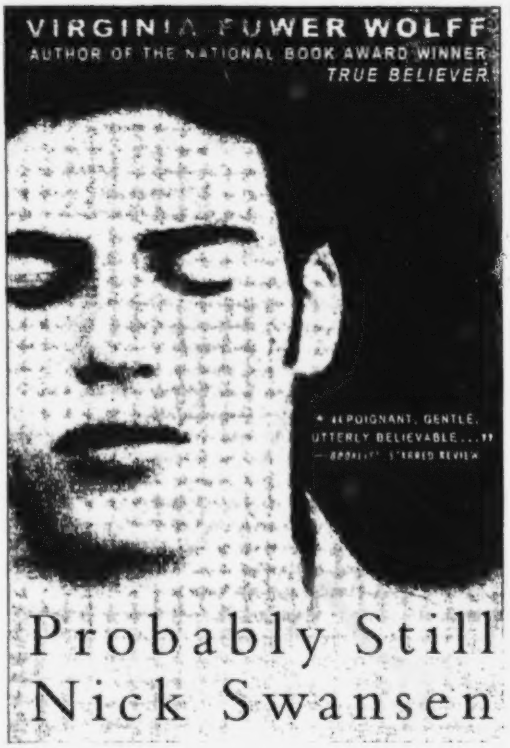
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past 20 years, Wolff has become a respected writer of novels for young adults. Her novels typically feature teenage characters who are struggling in some way. They are facing difficult or confusing situations in their lives and are working to overcome some type of difficulty—as Wolff says, "I major in disappointment." Many of her characters are outsiders, kids who feel somehow different and separate from those around them and who are struggling to fit into society. But her special talent is in making these outsiders seem just like everyone else, in making their struggles seem universal. As the critic for *Publishers Weekly* wrote, "Wolff unmasks the secret thoughts adolescents hold sacred and, in so doing, lets her readers know they are not alone." Her works also share another thematic concern: "I'm trying to teach that we learn only through pain," she stated, "which is what I finally figured out in my life."

Probably Still Nick Swansen


VIRGINIA EUWER WOLFF
AUTHOR OF THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER
TRUE BELIEVER
★ "POIGNANT, GENTLE, UTTERLY BELIEVABLE...."
—BOOKLIST, STARRED REVIEW
Probably Still
Nick Swansen

Becoming a writer of novels for young adults wasn't a deliberate decision on Wolff's part. In fact, the initial idea that eventually became her first young adult novel, *Probably Still Nick Swansen*, actually started as a murky concept. "I really didn't know who I was going to tell it to," she said, "and I really didn't know if what I was writing would turn out to be a novel or a short story. I even thought it might turn out to be a poem." What she did know, however, was that she wanted to write a story about an outsider because, as she once said, "people with strikes against them fascinate me and always have." This is why Wolff's first young adult protagonist, Nick Swansen, is mentally challenged; it gives the character an obstacle to try and overcome. *Probably Still Nick Swansen* also reflects her belief in learning through pain.

In *Probably Still Nick Swansen* (1988), the title character is a 16-year-old high school student who just wants to be a normal person despite his learning disability. And in many ways Wolff portrays him as a typical teenager with typical teenage concerns, one of the most important of which is getting a date to the prom. In this way she succeeds in making his problems seem universal, making it easy for the reader to identify with him. As Constance A. Mellon wrote in *School Library Journal*, the novel "stresses the similarities between Nick and other teens rather than highlighting the differences." The author tells the story through Nick's eyes, and in order to do so most effectively she said she "practiced being a boy. . . . I tried to understand how a boy would feel in the sort of situation in which Nick finds himself. . . . I never knew a boy like Nick, though. Lots of people ask that question, as if I vere a nonfiction writer." Nevertheless, Nick and Wolff share at least one hing in common: the fear of failure. Throughout the book, Nick is afraid hat he won't be accepted by others and that he can't do anything right be- use he is not too bright. Similarly, the author has said that she has been aid most of her life: "I was a scared kid. I was a scared young adult. I was

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a terrified wife and an apprehensive mother. It took so long for me to get any courage, and now I've got courage."

For Wolff, courage was found by trying things she didn't think she could do, including writing a book and quitting smoking. For Nick, courage can be found in the encouragement of the supportive teachers and parents around him. Indeed, the author has been praised for her strong supporting characters. "Strong adult role models are a hallmark of Wolff's writing," Teri S. Lesesne observed in *Writers for Young Adults*.

The Mozart Season

Like Nick Swansen, Allegra Leah Shapiro in *The Mozart Season* (1991) benefits greatly from the adults around her. When musically gifted, 12-year-old Allegra finds out that she has been invited to compete in a musician competition, she has to give up her plans for a relaxing summer in order to practice Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4. Even though she is an outstanding violinist for her age, Allegra comes to appreciate that winning the competition will take a lot of work and sacrifice. She learns from her music teacher, Mr. Kaplan, that being technically correct when playing Mozart is not enough; she also has to lend some of her own personal interpretation to the piece while remaining true to the original music. Doing this means that Allegra ends up exploring some of her own personal issues, which include being the daughter of a Jew and a gentile.

Because of her mixed heritage, Allegra doesn't feel like she is truly part of either group. She explores part of her past by learning about her grandmother, who was killed in a Nazi concentration camp. The important theme of *The Mozart Season,* therefore, is not so much whether Allegra will win the music competition as it is the journey she undergoes in getting there. Along the way, she gets support from Mr. Kaplan, her parents, her friends, an older musician, and even her brother. As Olin Chism pointed out in an *Entertainment Weekly* review of *The Mozart Season,* "There are no pat answers, but Allegra is a much more mature person at the end of the Mozart season than she was at the beginning."

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While Wolff's musical background certainly is central to *The Mozart Season,* she has said that Allegra's story is in no way based on her own life. "I've played in orchestras most of my life," she said, "beginning when I was 10 or 11. But the real story, Allegra's, isn't mine at all. She's a much better violinist than I am, has a different kind of family, everything." The character of Allegra was at least partially inspired by other talented kids Wolff has known. "When I was a kid, just an ordinary kid trying to get her bow to behave and trying to shift without sounding like a frightened rat, I knew so MANY gifted kids," she said, "people who could play circles around me. I was always fascinated by what appeared to be their in-group, and I think I probably still am."

Make Lemonade

Allegra faces many challenges in *The Mozart Season,* but these are nothing compared to the problems that confront the characters in Wolff's next novel, *Make Lemonade* (1993). The story features two inner-city young people: LaVaughn is 14 years old and lives in the projects with her mother, and Jolly is 17 and already has two children to support without the help of either child's father. When LaVaughn answers a newspaper ad to make some money for college as a baby sitter, she is surprised to find out she is only three years younger than her employer. Jolly's apartment is a disgraceful mess, too, and LaVaughn almost turns down the job because of this. However, she falls in love with Jolly's children and decides to help after all. When Jolly loses her job after accusing her boss of sexual harassment, LaVaughn agrees to keep helping with the kids without pay, but she soon grows uncomfortable with the idea of giving Jolly what amounts to charity. Sharing her belief that a good education is a ticket out of poverty and the ghetto, LaVaughn encourages Jolly to go back to school.

Widely praised by critics and the recipient of numerous awards, *Make Lemonade* was Wolff's biggest literary success up to that time.

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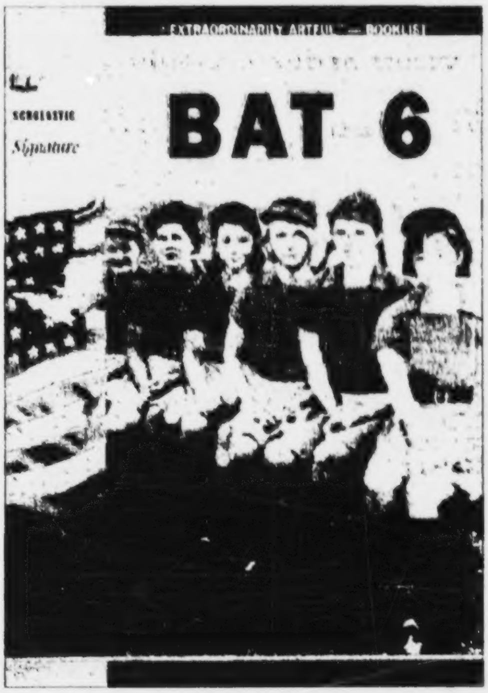
Many reviewers were impressed that the story managed to remain optimistic, despite the relentlessly desperate, poverty-stricken lives the characters lead. "Radiant with hope," wrote one *Publishers Weekly* contributor, "this keenly observed and poignant novel is a stellar addition to [young adult] literature." Two aspects of the book in particular fascinated readers: that the entire novel is written like a non-rhyming poem and that Wolff never mentions her characters' race. Instead of arranging the text in paragraphs, each line of type ends where the narrator, LaVaughn, would most likely pause in normal conversation. "The form just came to me," Wolff said of the unusual writing style in *Make Lemonade*. "It was less intimidating than trying to fill a whole paragraph." She also felt that the short chapters and shorter lines would make the book easier to read for reluctant readers. "I wanted young girls in Jolly's situation, maybe pregnant or with babies, and maybe going back to school, to be able to say, 'I read two chapters!'"

> *"Wolff unmasks the secret thoughts adolescents hold sacred and, in so doing, lets her readers know they are not alone."*
> **—Publishers Weekly**

Race proved to be another aspect of *Make Lemonade* that intrigued readers. When asked why she decided not to describe the race of either LaVaughn or Jolly, the author conceded that "the idea of race went through my head at the beginning, but I settled into the writing of the book and the emotions of the characters and I honestly didn't think about it. Then I went to New York, to the public library where I was to appear on a panel, and I found 200 librarians all asking me whether the kids in the book were white or black. It's not a question I knew how to answer. I still don't, except to say that I didn't see faces so much as I heard voices when I was writing." By eliminating the factor of race, Wolff again made her characters and their problems seem universal.

Bat 6

With her next novel, *Bat 6* (1998), however, ethnicity became a central issue. The title refers to an annual baseball game played between sixth-grade teams of girls from two fictional Oregon towns. Set in the year 1949, not long after the end of World War II, a black cloud descends over the event when there's a tragic incident at the baseball game between two of the players: Aki Mikami, a Japanese-American girl, and Shazam, a talented ball player whose father was killed at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked in 1941.



Wolff takes an interesting narrative approach with *Bat 6* by letting each of the girls on both teams talk about their interpretations of what really went on at the baseball game. In this way, the author is able to analyze people's prejudices and beliefs from over 20 different viewpoints. "Gradually," commented Michael Cart in a *Booklist* review of *Bat 6,* "their individual vignettes merge into an extraordinarily artful portrait of a moment in American history that challenged our comfortable assumptions about who we were and what we believed." And while *Horn Book* critic Nancy Vasilakis worried that Aki's character was a bit of a stereotype, she added that "Shazam is a complex and compelling protagonist" and that "Wolff's evocation of period and place . . . is indisputably masterful."

True Believer

When Wolff had completed *Make Lemonade,* she still felt that there was more to tell about her character LaVaughn. "Young readers, in letters, kept telling me that the ending [of *Make Lemonade*] was up in the air. . . . I felt I knew LaVaughn well. She felt like a person I wanted to revisit. I felt that LaVaughn was a friend." So Wolff decided to revisit the characters from *Make Lemonade.* To understand her story, Wolff interviewed her, as she explains here. "You sit down with pen and paper — some people use a tape recorder—and interview her. I type a lot of questions and she answers them: 'What do you like to do? What are you hobbies?' At first she was stubborn: 'Why should I talk to you now — you weren't interested in me in the first draft!'" Ultimately Wolff decided to write a trilogy, with *Make Lemonade* as its first part. Having recently quit teaching, she now had more time to devote to writing. Wolff completed the second installment of the trilogy, *True Believer,* in 2001; she's still working on the third book at press time.

Written again in Wolff's distinctive, poetry-like form, *True Believer* focuses more on LaVaughn, examining her intellectual and emotional growth and

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addressing the issue of religion in teenagers' lives. Having gone through a lot of a religious questioning when she was a teenager herself, Wolff sympathizes with what many teens go through when they begin to wonder about the existence of God. In *True Believer* two of LaVaughn's friends, Myrtle and Annie, join the "Cross Your Legs for Jesus" club. They can't understand why LaVaughn, who is still questioning her faith, doesn't want to join the "club" with them because of the narrow definition of God that it advocates.

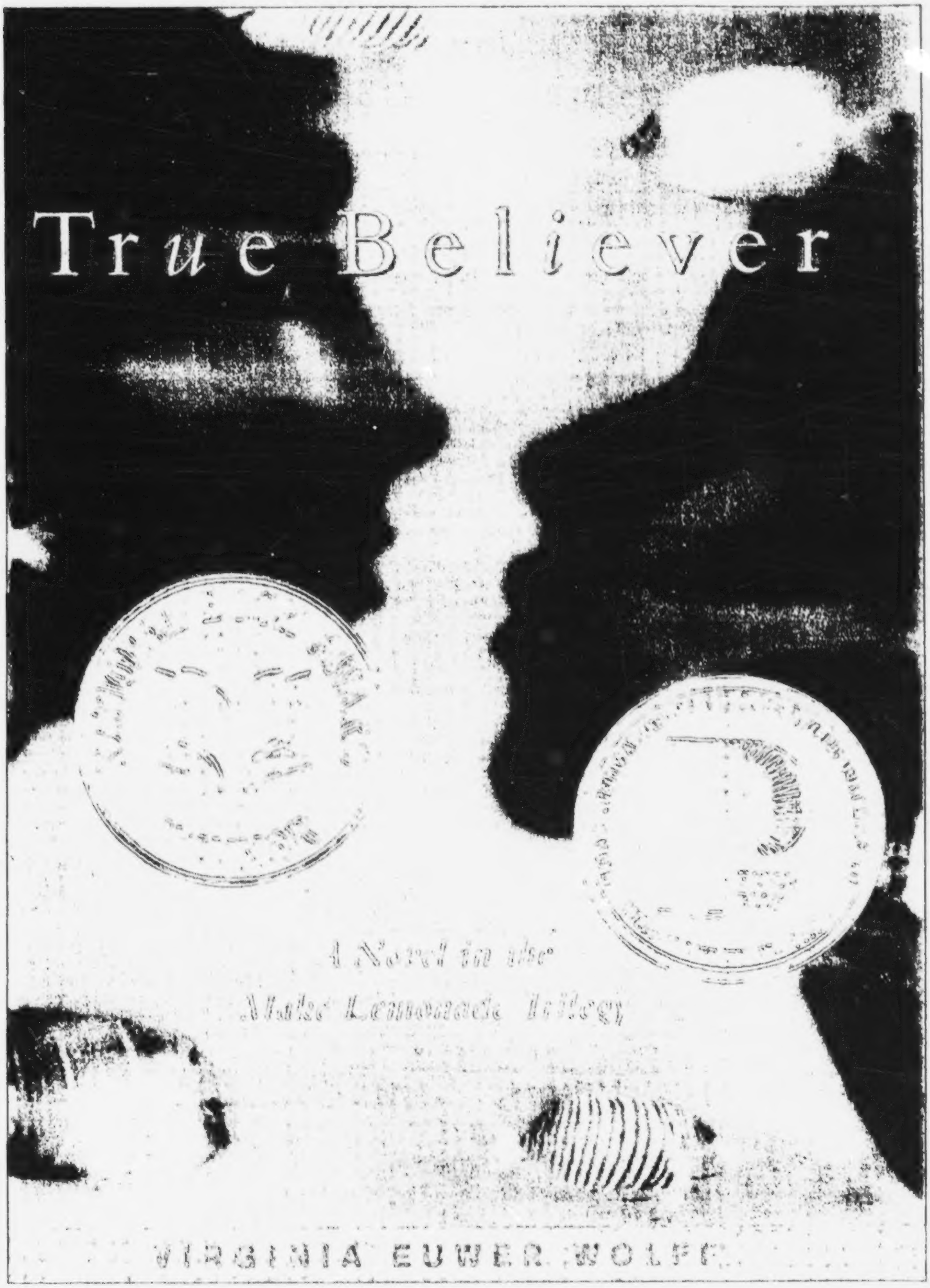
In addition to the growing distance she senses between her and her friends, LaVaughn is also in the midst of turbulent emotions involving a boy named Jody. Jody is on the swim team, and LaVaughn becomes giddy just being near him. In the meantime, her lab partner, Patrick, has a crush on her, yet she hardly notices him. What lies ahead for her in *True Believer* will shake up LaVaughn's ideas about both love and religion. However, her intellectual curiosity, determination to succeed in school, and supportive mother and teachers all help to keep her grounded.

Wolff worried that a sequel to *Make Lemonade* would not be as successful as the original, and she was also concerned about addressing the sensitive topic of religion. "I found it difficult to write about religion with lucidity," she said; "I wanted to be fair, strenuously fair. Readers have their own religious beliefs and questions. The teenage years are the years to examine faith — the need to be independent and the need to be anchored."

"I found it difficult to write about religion with lucidity; I wanted to be fair, strenuously fair. Readers have their own religious beliefs and questions. The teenage years are the years to examine faith — the need to be independent and the need to be anchored."

Critical Success

Wolff's worries proved to be unfounded: *True Believer* was both a popular and critical success. Reviewers were impressed by the way Wolff successfully combined the many different facets of LaVaughn's life — intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. "Wolff surpassed herself with this sequel," asserted a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer. *Booklist* contributor Gillian Engberg similarly described *True Believer* as a powerful sequel that is "transcendent,



raw, and fiercely optimistic," while the reviewer for *Horn Book* called it "a heartbreaking story, truthful in its pain but buoyed by LaVaughn's resilient spirit and by a redemptive and earned ending." *True Believer* was such a critical success that it secured several important awards. It won the 2002

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National Book Award for Young People's Literature and was named a 2002 Michael Printz Award Honor Book, a runner-up to one of the most prestigious prizes in young adult literature.

Although it takes her years to plan and write a new novel, Wolff anticipates that the final book in the trilogy will answer some questions about Jolly. "In *Make Lemonade,*" said the author, "Jolly keeps saying, 'I don't have folks. No, I never had folks.' That raises questions: Who had this baby? Where did Jolly come from? Who are Jolly's parents?" Wolff explores such questions about her characters in order to reach out to young readers who may be facing similar challenges in their own lives.

When she received the Michael L. Printz Honor Book award for *True Believer,* Wolff said in her acceptance speech: "Many of us authors for young adults seem to write in a spirit of inquisition and apologia: vulnerable young people continually asking themselves the murkiest of questions and explaining themselves to themselves. These interior journeys seem to be our lifeblood. . . . I think we write in an unending search for lucidity. And we write for young people who are at the age when lucidity can make the difference: when a single lucid moment can prevent an adolescent from breaking apart."

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"

HOME AND FAMILY

Wolff was married in 1959 to Art Wolff. They had two children, Anthony and Juliet, before they divorced in 1976. After that, she returned to her childhood roots in Oregon. Wolff now lives near Mt. Hood in a cottage that was once a Jesuit retreat. Her children are now grown and living on their own.

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HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Other than writing, playing the violin is an important part of Wolff's life. Having played since she was eight, she gave up the violin after college because she just felt she would never be good enough. For 15 years, she didn't play a note, a hiatus she now calls "a huge mistake! One of the worst of my life!" A lover of classical music by such composers as Brahms, Beethoven, and Schumann, she has performed in a number of quartets and orchestras, preferring to play second violin. Music, for her, is also an important part of writing. "I'm always listening to classical music while I'm writing," she said, adding that "music touches the human heart with all its overwhelming sense of tragedy all the time."

WRITINGS

Novels

Rated PG, 1980 (adult)
Probably Still Nick Swansen, 1988 (young adult)
The Mozart Season, 1991 (young adult)
Make Lemonade, 1993 (young adult)
Bat 6, 1998 (young adult)
True Believer, 2001 (young adult)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Book Award for Young Adults (International Reading Association): 1989, for *Probably Still Nick Swansen*
Children's Book Award—Young Adult Category (International PEN-West): 1989, for *Probably Still Nick Swansen*
Best Book (*School Library Journal*): 1989, for *Probably Still Nick Swansen;* 1994, for *Make Lemonade;* 1999, for *Bat 6*
Young Adult Editor's Choice (*Booklist*): 1989, for *Probably Still Nick Swansen;* 1994, for *Make Lemonade*
Best Books for Young Adults (American Library Association): 1989, for *Probably Still Nick Swansen;* 1992, for *The Mozart Season;* 1994, for *Make Lemonade*
Golden Kite Award for Fiction (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators): 1993, for *Make Lemonade;* 2001, for *True Believer*
Children's Book Award (Child Study Children's Book Committee of Bank Street College): 1993, for *Make Lemonade*
Reading Magic Award (*Parenting Magazine*): 1993, for *Make Lemonade*

Best Kids' Book (*Parenting Magazine*): 1993, for *Make Lemonade*
Parents' Choice Award: 1993, for *Make Lemonade*
Blue Ribbon (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books): 1994, for *Make Lemonade*
Best Book for Children (American Library Association): 1994, for *Make Lemonade*
Recommended Book for Reluctant Readers (American Library Association): 1994, for *Make Lemonade*
Jane Addams Peace Award: 1999, for *Bat 6*
Notable Children's Book (American Library Association): 1999, for *Bat 6*
National Book Award for Young People's Literature: 2001, for *True Believer*

FURTHER READING

Books

Authors and Artists for Young Adults, Vol. 26, 1999
Contemporary Authors, Vol. 187, 1983
Gallo, Donald R. *Speaking for Ourselves, Too: More Autobiographical Sketches by Notable Authors of Books for Young Adults,* 1993
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St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers, 1999
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Booklist, Mar. 1, 1994, p.1250; May 1, 1998, p.1517; Feb. 1, 2001, p.1051
Entertainment Weekly, Apr. 17, 1992, p.70
Horn Book, Sep.-Oct. 1991, p.599; Sep.-Oct. 1993, p.606; July 1994, p.491; May-June 1998, p.297; July-Aug. 1998, p.500; Jan. 2001, p.98; May 2001, p.280
Publishers Weekly, Dec. 18, 2000, p.79
School Library Journal, Jan. 2001, p.136; Feb. 2002, p.54

Online Database

Biography Resource Center Online, 2003, articles from *Authors and Artists for Young Adults,* 1999; *Contemporary Authors Online,* 2002; and *St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers,* 1999

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WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

http://www.achuka.co.uk/features/wolff.htm
http://www2.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsandbooks/authorstudies/authorstudies.jhtml?IndexLetter=W

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How to Use the Cumulative Index

Our indexes have a new look. In an effort to make our indexes easier to use, we've combined the Name and General Index into a new, Cumulative Index. This single ready-reference resource covers all the volumes in *Biography Today,* both the general series and the special subject series. The new Cumulative Index contains complete listings of all individuals who have appeared in *Biography Today* since the series began. Their names appear in bold-faced type, followed by the issue in which they appear. The Cumulative Index also includes references for the occupations, nationalities, and ethnic and minority origins of individuals profiled in *Biography Today*.

We have also made some changes to our specialty indexes, the Places of Birth Index and the Birthday Index. To consolidate and to save space, the Places of Birth Index and the Birthday Index will no longer appear in the January and April issues of the softbound subscription series. But these indexes can still be found in the September issue of the softbound subscription series, in the hardbound Annual Cumulation at the end of each year, and in each volume of the special subject series.

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The General Series of *Biography Today* is denoted in the index with the month and year of the issue in which the individual appeared. Each individual also appears in the Annual Cumulation for that year.

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Special Subject Series

The Special Subject Series of *Biography Today* are each denoted in the index with an abbreviated form of the series name, plus the number of the volume in which the individual appears. They are listed as follows.

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Moseley, Jonny	Sport V.8	(Sports)
Peterson, Roger Tory	WorLdr V.1	(World Leaders: Environmental Leaders)
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Updates

Updated information on selected individuals appears in the Appendix at the end of the *Biography Today* Annual Cumulation. In the index, the original entry is listed first, followed by any updates.

Arafat, Yasir . . . . Sep 94; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96; Update 97; Update 98; Update 00; Update 01; Update 02
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Spock, Dr. Benjamin . . . . Sep 95; Update 98
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This cumulative index includes names, occupations, nationalities, and ethnic and minority origins that pertain to all individuals profiled in *Biography Today* since the debut of the series in 1992.

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Ndeti, Cosmas – *Machakos* . . . . Sep 95
Liberia
Tubman, William V. S.
– *Harper City* . . . . WorLdr V.2
Libya
Qaddafi, Muammar . . . . Apr 97
Louisiana
Dumars, Joe – *Natchitoches* . . . . . . Sport V.3
Gumbel, Bryant – *New Orleans* . . . . . Apr 97
Manning, Peyton – *New Orleans*. . . . Sep 00
Marsalis, Wynton – *New Orleans* . . . Apr 92
Rice, Anne – *New Orleans*. . . . . . Author V.3
Roberts, Cokie – *New Orleans* . . . . . . Apr 95
Spears, Britney – *Kentwood* . . . . Jan 01
Stewart, Kordell – *Marrero*. . . . . Sep 98
Macedonia
Teresa, Mother – *Skopje*. . . . . Apr 98
Maine
King, Stephen – *Portland* . . . . . . Author V.1
Malawi
Banda, Hastings Kamuzu
– *Chiwengo, Nyasaland* . . . . . WorLdr V.2
Maryland
Atwater-Rhodes, Amelia
– *Silver Spring* . . . . Author V.8
Collier, Bryan – *Salisbury* . . . . . Author V.11
Hesse, Karen – *Baltimore* . . . . . . Author V.5
Marshall, Thurgood – *Baltimore* . . . . . Jan 92
Ripken, Cal, Jr. – *Havre de Grace*. . Sport V.1
Sleator, William –
Havre de Grace . . . . Author V.11
Stepanek, Mattie – *Upper Marlboro* . . Apr 02
Massachusetts
Bush, George – *Milton*. . . . . Jan 92
Butcher, Susan – *Cambridge* . . . . . Sport V.1
Caplan, Arthur – *Boston* . . . . Science V.6
Cormier, Robert – *Leominister* . . Author V.1
Fanning, Shawn – *Brockton* . . . . Science V.5
Gilbert, Walter – *Cambridge*. . . . Science V.2
Grandin, Temple – *Boston*. . . . . Science V.3
Guey, Wendy – *Boston* . . . . Sep 96
Guy, Jasmine – *Boston* . . . . Sep 93
Kerrigan, Nancy – *Woburn* . . . . Apr 94
Krakauer, Jon – *Brookline* . . . . . . Author V.6
Lynch, Chris – *Boston* . . . . Author V.13
Meltzer, Milton – *Worcester* . . . Author V.11
Pine, Elizabeth Michele – *Boston* . . . . Jan 94
Robison, Emily – *Pittsfield* . . . . . PerfArt V.1
Scarry, Richard – *Boston* . . . . Sep 94
Seuss, Dr. – *Springfield* . . . . Jan 92
Sones, Sonya – *Boston*. . . . . Author V.11
Speare, Elizabeth George
– *Melrose*. . . . . Sep 95
Taymor, Julie – *Newton*. . . . . PerfArt V.1
Thompson, Jenny – *Georgetown* . . Sport V.5
Voigt, Cynthia – *Boston*. . . . . Oct 92
Walters, Barbara – *Boston*. . . . . Sep 94
Mexico
Jiménez, Francisco – *San Pedro,*
Tlaquepaque, ... Author V.13
Rivera, Diego – *Guanajuato* . . . . . . Artist V.1
Michigan
Applegate, K.A. Jan 00
Askins, Renee. . . . . WorLdr V.1

Canady, Alexa – *Lansing* ...... Science V.6
Carson, Ben – *Detroit* .... Science V.4
Curtis, Christopher Paul – *Flint* Author V.4
Galeczka, Chris – *Sterling Heights* ... Apr 96
Johnson, Magic – *Lansing* .... Apr 92
Kiraly, Karch – *Jackson* .... Sport V.4
Krone, Julie – *Benton Harbor* .... Jan 95
Lalas, Alexi – *Royal Oak* .... Sep 94
Mohajer, Dineh – *Bloomfield Hills* ... Jan 02
Riley, Dawn – *Detroit* .... Sport V.4
Scieszka, Jon – *Flint* .... Author V.9
Shabazz, Betty – *Detroit* .... Apr 98
Small, David – *Detroit* .... Author V.10
Van Allsburg, Chris – *Grand Rapids* .. Apr 92
Ward, Lloyd D. – *Romulus* .... Jan 01
Watson, Barry – *Traverse City* ...... Sep 02
Webb, Alan – *Ann Arbor* .... Sep 01
Williams, Serena – *Saginaw* ..... Sport V.4
Winans, CeCe – *Detroit* .... Apr 00

Minnesota

Burger, Warren – *St. Paul* .... Sep 95
Douglas, Marjory Stoneman – *Minneapolis* .... WorLdr V.1
Madden, John – *Austin* .... Sep 97
Mars, Forrest, Sr. – *Minneapolis* Science V.4
Murie, Olaus J. .... WorLdr V.1
Paulsen, Gary – *Minneapolis* ... Author V.1
Ryder, Winona – *Winona* .... Jan 93
Schulz, Charles – *Minneapolis* .. Author V.2
Scurry, Briana – *Minneapolis* .... Jan 00
Ventura, Jesse – *Minneapolis* .... Apr 99
Weinke, Chris – *St. Paul* .... Apr 01
Winfield, Dave – *St. Paul* .... Jan 93

Mississippi

Bass, Lance – *Clinton* .... Jan 01
Brandy – *McComb* .... Apr 96
Favre, Brett – *Gulfport* .... Sport V.2
Forman, Michele – *Biloxi* .... Jan 03
Hill, Faith – *Jackson* .... Sep 01
Jones, James Earl – *Arkabutla Township* .... Jan 95
McCarty, Oseola – *Wayne County* ... Jan 99
Payton, Walter – *Columbia* .... Jan 00
Rice, Jerry – *Crawford* .... Apr 93
Rimes, LeAnn – *Jackson* .... Jan 98
Taylor, Mildred D. – *Jackson* .... Author V.1
Winfrey, Oprah – *Kosciusko* .... Apr 92
Wright, Richard – *Natchez* ..... Author V.5

Missouri

Angelou, Maya – *St. Louis* .... Apr 93
Champagne, Larry III – *St. Louis* .... Apr 96
Goodman, John – *Affton* .... Sep 95
Heinlein, Robert – *Butler* ...... Author V.4
Hughes, Langston – *Joplin* ..... Author V.7
Lester, Julius – *St. Louis* .... Author V.7
Limbaugh, Rush – *Cape Girardeau* .. Sep 95
Miller, Shannon – *Rolla* .... Sep 94
Nye, Naomi Shihab – *St. Louis* .. Author V.8

Montana

Carvey, Dana – *Missoula* .... Jan 93
Horner, Jack – *Shelby* .... Science V.1
Lowe, Alex – *Missoula* .... Sport V.4

Morocco

Hassan II – *Rabat* .... WorLdr V.2

Myanmar

see Burma

Nebraska

Cheney, Dick – *Lincoln* .... Jan 02
Roddick, Andy – *Omaha* .... Jan 03

Nevada

Agassi, Andre – *Las Vegas* .... Jul 92
Schwikert, Tasha – *Las Vegas* .... Sport V.7

New Hampshire

Zirkle, Aliy – *Manchester* .... Sport V.6

New Jersey

Blume, Judy .... Jan 92
Carpenter, Mary Chapin – *Princeton* .... Sep 94
Clements, Andrew – *Camden* .. Author V.13
Dunst, Kirsten – *Point Pleasant* .. PerfArt V.1
Earle, Sylvia – *Gibbstown* ...... Science V.1
Glover, Savion – *Newark* .... Apr 99
Gwaltney, John Langston – *Orange* .... Science V.3
Hill, Lauryn – *South Orange* .... Sep 99
Houston, Whitney – *Newark* .... Sep 94
Ice-T – *Newark* .... Apr 93
Jeter, Derek – *Pequannock* .... Sport V.4
Lawrence, Jacob – *Atlantic City* .. Artist V.1
Love, Susan – *Long Branch* .... Science V.3
Martin, Ann M. – *Princeton* .... Jan 92
Morrison, Lillian – *Jersey City* .. Author V.12
Muniz, Frankie – *Ridgewood* .... Jan 01
O'Neal, Shaquille – *Newark* .... Sep 93
Pinsky, Robert – *Long Branch* .. Author V.7
Queen Latifah – *Newark* .... Apr 92
Rodman, Dennis – *Trenton* .... Apr 96
Schwarzkopf, H. Norman – *Trenton* .. Jan 92
Sinatra, Frank – *Hoboken* .... Jan 99
Thomas, Dave – *Atlantic City* ...... Apr 96

New Mexico

Bezos, Jeff – *Albuquerque* .... Apr 01

Foreman, Dave – *Albuquerque* . . . WorLdr V.1
Villa-Komaroff, Lydia – *Las Vegas* . . . . Science V.6

New York State

Aaliyah – *Brooklyn* . . . . Jan 02
Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem – *New York City* . . . . Sport V.1
Abzug, Bella – *Bronx* . . . . Sep 98
Aguilera, Christina – *Staten Island* . . Apr 00
Anderson, Laurie Halse – *Potsdam* . . . . Author V.11
Avi – *New York City* . . . . Jan 93
Baldwin, James – *New York City* . . . . Author V.2
Bennett, Cherie – *Buffalo* . . . . . . Author V.9
Blair, Bonnie – *Cornwall* . . . . Apr 94
Blige, Mary J. – *Yonkers* . . . . Apr 02
Bourke-White, Margaret – *New York City* . . . . Artist V.1
Brody, Jane – *Brooklyn* . . . . Science V.2
Brown, Claude – *New York City* . . . . Author V.12
Burke, Chris – *New York City* . . . . Sep 93
Burns, Ken – *Brooklyn* . . . . Jan 95
Bush, Barbara – *New York City* . . . . . . Jan 92
Calderone, Mary S. – *New York City* . . . . Science V.3
Capriati, Jennifer – *Long Island* . . . Sport V.6
Carey, Mariah – *New York City* . . . . . Apr 96
Carle, Eric – *Syracuse* . . . . Author V.1
Carter, Nick – *Jamestown* . . . . Jan 00
Cohen, Adam Ezra – *New York City* Apr 97
Collins, Eileen – *Elmira* . . . . Science V.4
Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy) – *New York City* . . . . Apr 98
Cooney, Barbara – *Brooklyn* . . . . Author V.8
Cooney, Caroline B. – *Geneva* . . . Author V.4
Coville, Bruce – *Syracuse* . . . . Author V.9
Cronin, John – *Yonkers* . . . . WorLdr V.3
Culkin, Macaulay – *New York City* . . Sep 93
Danes, Claire – *New York City* . . . . . . Sep 97
de Mille, Agnes – *New York City* . . . . Jan 95
Diesel, Vin – *New York City* . . . . Jan 03
Duchovny, David – *New York City* . . Apr 96
Elion, Gertrude – *New York City* . . . . Science V.6
Farrakhan, Louis – *Bronx* . . . . Jan 97
Fatone, Joey – *Brooklyn* . . . . Jan 01
Fauci, Anthony S. – *Brooklyn* . . . Science V.7
Frankenthaler, Helen – *New York City* . . . . Artist V.1
Gellar, Sarah Michelle – *New York City* . . . . Jan 99
Giff, Patricia Reilly – *Queens* . . . . Author V.7
Ginsburg, Ruth Bader – *Brooklyn* . . . . Jan 94
Giuliani, Rudolph – *Brooklyn* . . . . Sep 02
Goldberg, Whoopi – *New York City* . . . . Apr 94
Gould, Stephen Jay – *New York City* . . . . Science V.2
Haley, Alex – *Ithaca* . . . . Apr 92
Hart, Melissa Joan – *Smithtown* . . . . . Jan 94
Healy, Bernadine – *Queens* . . . . Science V.1
Holdsclaw, Chamique – *Queens* . . . . . Sep 00
Hopper, Grace Murray – *New York City* . . . . Science V.5
Hughes, Sarah – *Great Neck* . . . . Jan 03
James, Cheryl – *New York City* . . . . . Apr 95
Jordan, Michael – *Brooklyn* . . . . Jan 92
Kamler, Kenneth – *New York City* . . . . Science V.6
Kerr, M.E. – *Auburn* . . . . Author V.1
Konigsburg, E.L. – *New York City* . . . . Author V.3
Kurzweil, Raymond – *New York City* . . . . Science V.2
Lee, Stan – *New York City* . . . . . Author V.7
Lemelson, Jerome – *Staten Island* . . . . Science V.3
L'Engle, Madeleine – *New York City* . . . . Jan 92; Apr 01
Leno, Jay – *New Rochelle* . . . . Jul 92
Lewis, Shari – *New York City* . . . . Jan 99
Lipsyte, Robert – *New York City* . . . . Author V.12
Lisanti, Mariangela – *Bronx* . . . . Sep 01
Lopez, Jennifer – *Bronx* . . . . Jan 02
Lowman, Meg – *Elmira* . . . . Science V.4
Mirra, Dave – *Syracuse* . . . . Sep 02
Mittermeier, Russell A. – *New York City* . . . . WorLdr V.1
Moses, Grandma – *Greenwich* . . . Artist V.1
Moss, Cynthia – *Ossining* . . . . . WorLdr V.3
O'Donnell, Rosie – *Commack* . . . . . . Apr 97
Oppenheimer, J. Robert – *New York City* . . . . Science V.1
Pascal, Francine – *New York City* . . . . Author V.6
Peterson, Roger Tory – *Jamestown* . . . . WorLdr V.1
Pike, Christopher – *Brooklyn* . . . . Sep 96

Powell, Colin – *New York City* . . . . . . Jan 92
Prelutsky, Jack – *Brooklyn* . . . . . . Author V.2
Reeve, Christopher – *Manhattan* . . . . Jan 97
Rinaldi, Ann – *New York City* . . . Author V.8
Ringgold, Faith – *New York City* . Author V.2
Rockwell, Norman – *New York City* . . . . Artist V.1
Rodriguez, Alex – *New York City* . . Sport V.6
Roper, Dee Dee – *New York City* . . . . Apr 95
Sachar, Louis – *East Meadow* . . . Author V.6
Sagan, Carl – *Brooklyn* . . . . Science V.1
Salinger, J.D. – *New York City* . . Author V.2
Salk, Jonas – *New York City* . . . . Jan 94
Sealfon, Rebecca – *New York City* . . . Sep 97
Seinfeld, Jerry – *Brooklyn* . . . . Oct 92
Sendak, Maurice – *Brooklyn* . . . . Author V.2
Shakur, Tupac – *Bronx* . . . . Apr 97
Strasser, Todd – *New York City* . . Author V.7
Vidal, Christina – *Queens* . . . . . . PerfArt V.1
Washington, Denzel – *Mount Vernon* . . Jan 93
Wayans, Keenen Ivory – *New York City* . . . . Jan 93
White, E.B. – *Mount Vernon* . . . . Author V.1
WilderBrathwaite, Gloria – *Brooklyn* . . . . Science V.7
Williams, Garth – *New York City* . Author V.2
Yolen, Jane – *New York City* . . . . Author V.7
Zindel, Paul – *Staten Island* . . . . . Author V.1

New Zealand
Hillary, Sir Edmund – *Auckland* . . . . Sep 96

Nigeria
Olajuwon, Hakeem – *Lagos* . . . . Sep 95
Saro-Wiwa, Ken – *Bori, Rivers State* . . . . WorLdr V.1

North Carolina
Bearden, Romare – *Charlotte* . . . . . Artist V.1
Burnside, Aubyn – *Hickory* . . . . Sep 02
Byars, Betsy – *Charlotte* . . . . . . Author V.4
Chavis, Benjamin – *Oxford* . . . . Jan 94
Delany, Bessie – *Raleigh* . . . . Sep 99
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford – *Salisbury* . . Jul 92
Earnhardt, Dale – *Kannapolis* . . . . Apr 01
Petty, Richard – *Level Cross* . . . . . . Sport V.2
Williamson, Kevin – *New Bern* . . Author V.6
Willingham, Tyrone – *Kinston* . . . . . . Sep 02

Norway
Brundtland, Gro Harlem – *Baerum* . . . . Science V.3

Ohio
Anderson, Terry – *Lorain* . . . . Apr 92
Battle, Kathleen – *Portsmouth* . . . . Jan 93
Berry, Halle – *Cleveland* . . . . Jan 95
Creech, Sharon – *Mayfield Heights* . . . . Author V.5
Dove, Rita – *Akron* . . . . Jan 94
Draper, Sharon – *Cleveland* . . . . Apr 99
Dunbar, Paul Laurence – *Dayton* . . . . Author V.8
Farrell, Suzanne – *Cincinnati* . . . PerfArt V.1
Glenn, John – *Cambridge* . . . . Jan 99
Guisewite, Cathy – *Dayton* . . . . Sep 93
Haddix, Margaret Peterson – *Washington Court House* . . . Author V.11
Hamilton, Virginia – *Yellow Springs* . . . . Author V.1, Author V.12
Hampton, David . . . . Apr 99
Harbaugh, Jim – *Toledo* . . . . Sport V.3
Holmes, Katie – *Toledo* . . . . Jan 00
Lin, Maya – *Athens* . . . . Sep 97
Lovell, Jim – *Cleveland* . . . . Jan 96
Morrison, Toni – *Lorain* . . . . Jan 94
Nelson, Marilyn – *Cleveland* . . . Author V.13
Nicklaus, Jack – *Columbus* . . . . Sport V.2
Nielsen, Jerri – *Salem* . . . . Science V.7
Perry, Luke – *Mansfield* . . . . Jan 92
Rose, Pete – *Cincinnati* . . . . Jan 92
Shula, Don – *Grand River* . . . . Apr 96
Spielberg, Steven – *Cincinnati* . . . . . . Jan 94
Steinem, Gloria – *Toledo* . . . . Oct 92
Stine, R.L. – *Columbus* . . . . Apr 94
Tompkins, Douglas – *Conneaut* . . . . WorLdr V.3
Woodson, Jacqueline – *Columbus* . . . . Author V.7

Oklahoma
Brooks, Garth – *Tulsa* . . . . Oct 92
Duke, David – *Tulsa* . . . . Apr 92
Ellison, Ralph – *Oklahoma City* . . Author V.3
Hanson, Ike – *Tulsa* . . . . Jan 98
Hanson, Taylor – *Tulsa* . . . . Jan 98
Hanson, Zac – *Tulsa* . . . . Jan 98
Hill, Anita – *Morris* . . . . Jan 93
Hinton, S.E. – *Tulsa* . . . . Author V.1
Mankiller, Wilma – *Tahlequah* . . . . . . Apr 94
Mantle, Mickey – *Spavinaw* . . . . Jan 96
McEntire, Reba – *McAlester* . . . . Sep 95
Pitt, Brad – *Shawnee* . . . . Sep 98

Oregon
Cleary, Beverly – *McMinnville* . . . . . . Apr 94
Engelbart, Douglas – *Portland* . . Science V.5
Groening, Matt – *Portland* . . . . Jan 92
Harding, Tonya – *Portland* . . . . Sep 94
Hooper, Geoff – *Salem* . . . . Jan 94

Pauling, Linus – *Portland* . . . . Jan 95
Phoenix, River – *Madras* . . . . Apr 94
Schroeder, Pat – *Portland* . . . . Jan 97
Wolff, Virginia Euwer
  – *Portland* . . . . Author V.13

Pakistan

Bhutto, Benazir – *Karachi* . . . . Apr 95
Masih, Iqbal . . . . Jan 96

Palestine

Perlman, Itzhak – *Tel Aviv* . . . . Jan 95
Rabin, Yitzhak – *Jerusalem* . . . . Oct 92

Panama

McCain, John – *Panama*
  Canal Zone . . . . Apr 00

Pennsylvania

Abbey, Edward – *Indiana* . . . . . WorLdr V.1
Alexander, Lloyd – *Philadelphia* . Author V.6
Anderson, Marian – *Philadelphia* . . . . Jan 94
Armstrong, Robb – *Philadelphia* . . Author V.9
Berenstain, Jan – *Philadelphia* . . Author V.2
Berenstain, Stan – *Philadelphia* . Author V.2
Bradley, Ed – *Philadelphia* . . . . Apr 94
Bryant, Kobe – *Philadelphia* . . . . Apr 99
Calder, Alexander – *Lawnton* . . . . Artist V.1
Carson, Rachel – *Springdale* . . . WorLdr V.1
Chamberlain, Wilt – *Philadelphia* . . Sport V.4
Cosby, Bill . . . . Jan 92
DiCamillo, Kate – *Philadelphia* . . Author V.10
Diemer, Walter – *Philadelphia* . . . . . . Apr 98
Duncan, Lois – *Philadelphia* . . . . Sep 93
Flake, Sharon – *Philadelphia* . . . Author V.13
Gantos, Jack – *Mount Pleasant* . . Author V.10
George, Eddie – *Philadelphia* . . . . . Sport V.6
Gingrich, Newt – *Harrisburg* . . . . Apr 95
Griffey, Ken, Jr. – *Donora* . . . . Sport V.1
Iacocca, Lee A. – *Allentown* . . . . Jan 92
Jamison, Judith – *Philadelphia* . . . . . . Jan 96
Kirkpatrick, Chris – *Clarion* . . . . Jan 01
Lipinski, Tara – *Philadelphia* . . . . Apr 98
Maguire, Martie – *York* . . . . PerfArt V.1
Marino, Dan – *Pittsburgh* . . . . Apr 93
McCary, Michael – *Philadelphia* . . . . . Jan 96
Mead, Margaret – *Philadelphia* . Science V.2
Montana, Joe – *New Eagle* . . . . Jan 95
Morris, Nathan – *Philadelphia* . . . . . . Jan 96
Morris, Wanya – *Philadelphia* . . . . Jan 96
Pierce, Tamora – *Connellsville* . . Author V.13
Pinkney, Jerry – *Philadelphia* . . . Author V.2
Smith, Will – *Philadelphia* . . . . Sep 94
Smyers, Karen – *Corry* . . . . Sport V.4
Stanford, John – *Darby* . . . . Sep 99
Stockman, Shawn – *Philadelphia* . . . . Jan 96
Thomas, Jonathan Taylor
  – *Bethlehem* . . . . Apr 95
Van Meter, Vicki – *Meadville* . . . . Jan 95
Warhol, Andy . . . . Artist V.1
Wilson, August – *Pittsburgh* . . . . Author V.4

Poland

John Paul II – *Wadowice* . . . . Oct 92
Opdyke, Irene Gut – *Kozienice* . . Author V.9
Sabin, Albert – *Bialystok* . . . . Science V.1

Puerto Rico

Lopez, Charlotte . . . . Apr 94
Martin, Ricky – *Santurce* . . . . Jan 00
Moseley, Jonny – *San Juan* . . . . . . Sport V.8
Novello, Antonia – *Fajardo* . . . . Apr 92

Rhode Island

Clark, Kelly – *Newport* . . . . Sport V.8
Gilman, Billy – *Westerly* . . . . Apr 02

Romania

Dumitriu, Ioana – *Bucharest* . . . Science V.3
Nechita, Alexandra – *Vaslui* . . . . Jan 98
Risca, Viviana – *Bucharest* . . . . Sep 00

Russia

Asimov, Isaac – *Petrovichi* . . . . Jul 92
Chagall, Marc – *Vitebsk* . . . . Artist V.1
Fedorov, Sergei – *Pskov* . . . . Apr 94
Gorbachev, Mikhail – *Privolnoye* . . . . Jan 92
Nevelson, Louise – *Kiev* . . . . Artist V.1
Nureyev, Rudolf . . . . Apr 93
Tartakovsky, Genndy
  – *Moscow* . . . . Author V.11
Yeltsin, Boris – *Butka* . . . . Apr 92

Saudi Arabia

bin Laden, Osama – *Riyadh* . . . . Apr 02

Scotland

Muir, John – *Dunbar* . . . . WorLdr V.3

Senegal

Senghor, Léopold Sédar – *Joal* . . . WorLdr V.2

Serbia

Milosevic, Slobodan – *Pozarevac* . . . . Sep 99
Seles, Monica – *Novi Sad* . . . . Jan 96

Somalia

Aidid, Mohammed Farah . . . . . WorLdr V.2

South Africa

de Klerk, F.W. – *Mayfair* . . . . Apr 94
Mandela, Nelson – *Umtata, Transkei* . . Jan 92
Mandela, Winnie
  – *Pondoland, Transkei* . . . . WorLdr V.2
Tolkien, J.R.R. – *Bloemfontein* . . . . Jan 02

South Carolina
- Childress, Alice – *Charleston* . . . Author V.1
- Daniel, Beth – *Charleston* . . . Sport V.1
- Edelman, Marian Wright – *Bennettsville* . . . Apr 93
- Garnett, Kevin – *Greenville* . . . Sport V.6
- Gillespie, Dizzy – *Cheraw* . . . Apr 93
- Hunter-Gault, Charlayne – *Due West* . . . Jan 00
- Jackson, Jesse – *Greenville* . . . Sep 95

South Korea
- An Na . . . Author V.12
- Kim Dae-jung – *Hugwang* . . . Sep 01
- Pak, Se Ri – *Daejeon* . . . Sport V.4

Spain
- Domingo, Placido – *Madrid* . . . Sep 95
- Garcia, Sergio – *Castellon* . . . Sport V.7
- Iglesias, Enrique – *Madrid* . . . Jan 03
- Ochoa, Severo – *Luarca* . . . Jan 94
- Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa – *Barcelona* . . . Sport V.1

Sweden
- Lindgren, Astrid – *Vimmerby* . . . Author V.13
- Sorenstam, Annika – *Stockholm* . . . Sport V.6

Taiwan
- Ho, David – *Taichung* . . . Science V.6

Tanzania
- Nyerere, Julius Kambarage . . . WorLdr V.2

Tennessee
- Andrews, Ned – *Oakridge* . . . Sep 94
- Doherty, Shannen – *Memphis* . . . Apr 92
- Fitzhugh, Louise – *Memphis* . . . Author V.3
- Franklin, Aretha – *Memphis* . . . Apr 01
- Hardaway, Anfernee "Penny" – *Memphis* . . . Sport V.2
- McKissack, Fredrick L. – *Nashville* . . . Author V.3
- McKissack, Patricia C. – *Smyrna* . Author V.3
- Pinkwater, Daniel – *Memphis* . . Author V.8
- Rowan, Carl T. – *Ravenscroft* . . . Sep 01
- Rudolph, Wilma – *St. Bethlehem* . . . Apr 95
- Summitt, Pat – *Henrietta* . . . Sport V.3
- Timberlake, Justin – *Memphis* . . . Jan 01
- White, Reggie – *Chattanooga* . . . Jan 98

Texas
- Armstrong, Lance – *Plano* . . . Sep 00
- Baker, James – *Houston* . . . Oct 92
- Bledel, Alexis – *Houston* . . . Jan 03
- Cisneros, Henry – *San Antonio* . . . Sep 93
- Clarkson, Kelly – *Burleson* . . . Jan 03
- Duff, Hilary – *Houston* . . . Sep 02
- Ellerbee, Linda – *Bryan* . . . Apr 94
- Fiorina, Carly – *Austin* . . . Sep 01
- Groppe, Laura – *Houston* . . . Science V.5
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- Usher – *Dallas* . . . PerfArt V.1
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- Dalai Lama – *Takster, Amdo* . . . Sep 98

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- Gorbachev, Mikhail – *Privolnoye, Russia* . . . Jan 92
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Birthday Index

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1	Salinger, J.D.	1919
2	Asimov, Isaac	1920
3	Tolkien, J.R.R.	1892
4	Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds	1933
	Runyan, Marla	1969
	Shula, Don	1930
6	Van Draanen, Wendelin	?
7	Hurston, Zora Neale	?1891
	Rodriguez, Eloy	1947
8	Hawking, Stephen W.	1942
	Spelman, Lucy	1963
9	Garcia, Sergio	1980
	McLean, A.J	1978
	Menchu, Rigoberta	1959
	Nixon, Richard	1913
11	Leopold, Aldo	1887
12	Amanpour, Christiane	1958
	Bezos, Jeff	1964
	Lasseter, John	?1957
	Limbaugh, Rush	1951
13	Burnside, Aubyn	1985
	Webb, Alan	1983
14	Lucid, Shannon	1943
15	Werbach, Adam	1973
16	Aaliyah	1979
	Fossey, Dian	1932
	Lipsyte, Robert	1938
17	Carrey, Jim	1962
	Cormier, Robert	1925
	Jones, James Earl	1931
	Lewis, Shari	?1934
	Tartakovsky, Genndy	1970
18	Ali, Muhammad	1942
	Chavez, Julz	1962
	Messier, Mark	1961
19	Askins, Renee	1959
	Johnson, John	1918
21	Domingo, Placido	1941
	Nicklaus, Jack	1940
	Olajuwon, Hakeem	1963
22	Chavis, Benjamin	1948
	Ward, Lloyd D.	1949
23	Elion, Gertrude	1918
	Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber	1974
24	Haddock, Doris (Granny D)	1910
25	Alley, Kirstie	1955
26	Carter, Vince	1977
	Morita, Akio	1921
	Siskel, Gene	1946
	Tarbox, Katie	1982
27	Lester, Julius	1939
	Vasan, Nina	1984
28	Carter, Nick	1980
	Fatone, Joey	1977
	Gretzky, Wayne	1961
	Wood, Elijah	1981
29	Abbey, Edward	1927
	Gilbert, Sara	1975
	Hasek, Dominik	1965
	Peet, Bill	1915
	Winfrey, Oprah	1954
30	Alexander, Lloyd	1924
	Cheney, Dick	1941
	Engelbart, Douglas	1925
31	Collier, Bryan	1967
	Flannery, Sarah	1982
	Robinson, Jackie	1919
	Ryan, Nolan	1947
	Timberlake, Justin	1981

February		Year
1	Cabot, Meg	1967
	Hughes, Langston	1902
	Spinelli, Jerry	1941
	Yeltsin, Boris	1931
2	Shakira	1977
3	Heimlich, Henry	1920
	Nixon, Joan Lowery	1927
	Rockwell, Norman	1894
	Sanborn, Ryne	1989
4	Parks, Rosa	1913
5	Aaron, Hank	1934

February (continued)		Year
6	Leakey, Mary	1913
	Rosa, Emily	1987
	Zmeskal, Kim	1976
7	Brooks, Garth	1962
	Wang, An	1920
	Wilder, Laura Ingalls	1867
8	Grisham, John	1955
9	Love, Susan	1948
10	Konigsburg, E.L.	1930
	Norman, Greg	1955
11	Aniston, Jennifer	1969
	Brandy	1979
	Rowland, Kelly	1981
	Yolen, Jane	1939
12	Blume, Judy	1938
	Kurzweil, Raymond	1948
	Small, David	1945
	Woodson, Jacqueline	?1964
13	Moss, Randy	1977
	Sleator, William	1945
15	Groening, Matt	1954
	Jagr, Jaromir	1972
	Sones, Sonya	1952
	Van Dyken, Amy	1973
16	Freeman, Cathy	1973
17	Anderson, Marian	1897
	Hargreaves, Alison	1962
	Jordan, Michael	1963
18	Morrison, Toni	1931
19	Tan, Amy	1952
20	Adams, Ansel	1902
	Barkley, Charles	1963
	Cobain, Kurt	1967
	Crawford, Cindy	1966
	Hernandez, Livan	1975
	Littrell, Brian	1975
21	Carpenter, Mary Chapin	1958
	Hewitt, Jennifer Love	1979
	Jordan, Barbara	1936
	Lewis, John	1940
	Mugabe, Robert	1924
22	Barrymore, Drew	1975
	Fernandez, Lisa	1971
	Gorey, Edward	1925
23	Brown, Claude	1937
24	Jobs, Steven	1955
	Vernon, Mike	1963
	Whitestone, Heather	1973
25	Voigt, Cynthia	1942
26	Thompson, Jenny	1973
27	Clinton, Chelsea	1980
	Hunter-Gault, Charlayne	1942
28	Andretti, Mario	1940
	Pauling, Linus	1901

March		Year
1	Ellison, Ralph Waldo	1914
	Murie, Olaus J.	1889
	Nielsen, Jerri	1952
	Rabin, Yitzhak	1922
	Zamora, Pedro	1972
2	Gorbachev, Mikhail	1931
	Satcher, David	1941
	Seuss, Dr.	1904
3	Hooper, Geoff	1979
	Joyner-Kersee, Jackie	1962
	MacLachlan, Patricia	1938
4	Armstrong, Robb	1962
	Morgan, Garrett	1877
5	Margulis, Lynn	1938
6	Ashley, Maurice	1966
7	McCarty, Oseola	1908
8	Prinze, Freddie Jr.	1976
10	Guy, Jasmine	1964
	Miller, Shannon	1977
	Wolf, Hazel	1898
12	Hamilton, Virginia	1936
	Nye, Naomi Shihab	1952
13	Van Meter, Vicki	1982
14	Dayne, Ron	1977
	Hanson, Taylor	1983
	Williamson, Kevin	1965
15	Ginsburg, Ruth Bader	1933
	White, Ruth	1942
16	O'Neal, Shaquille	1972
17	Hamm, Mia	1972
	Nureyev, Rudolf	1938
18	Blair, Bonnie	1964
	de Klerk, F.W.	1936
	Griese, Brian	1975
	Queen Latifah	1970
19	Blanchard, Rachel	1976
20	Lee, Spike	1957
	Lowry, Lois	1937
	Sachar, Louis	1954
21	Gilbert, Walter	1932
	O'Donnell, Rosie	1962
22	Shatner, William	1931

March (continued)		Year
24	Manning, Peyton	1976
25	Dragila, Stacy	1971
	Franklin, Aretha	1942
	Granato, Cammi	1971
	Lovell, Jim	1928
	Park, Linda Sue	1960
	Steinem, Gloria	1934
	Swoopes, Sheryl	1971
26	Allen, Marcus	1960
	Erdös, Paul	1913
	O'Connor, Sandra Day	1930
	Stockton, John	1962
27	Carey, Mariah	1970
	Wrede, Patricia C.	1953
28	James, Cheryl	
	McEntire, Reba	1955
	Tompkins, Douglas	1943
29	Capriati, Jennifer	1976
30	Dion, Celine	1968
	Hammer	1933
31	Caplan, Arthur	1950
	Chavez, Cesar	1927
	Gore, Al	1948
	Howe, Gordie	1928

April		Year
1	Maathai, Wangari	1940
2	Carvey, Dana	1955
3	Garth, Jennie	1972
	Goodall, Jane	1934
	Street, Picabo	1971
4	Angelou, Maya	1928
	Mirra, Dave	1974
5	Peck, Richard	1934
	Powell, Colin	1937
6	Watson, James D.	1928
7	Chan, Jackie	1954
	Douglas, Marjory Stoneman	1890
	Forman, Michele	1946
8	Annan, Kofi	1938
9	Haddix, Margaret Peterson	1964
10	Madden, John	1936
12	Cleary, Beverly	1916
	Danes, Claire	1979
	Doherty, Shannen	1971
	Hawk, Tony	1968
	Letterman, David	1947
	Soto, Gary	1952
13	Brandis, Jonathan	1976
	Henry, Marguerite	1902
14	Collins, Francis	1950
	Gellar, Sarah Michelle	1977
	Maddux, Greg	1966
	Rose, Pete	1941
15	Martin, Bernard	1954
16	Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem	1947
	Atwater-Rhodes, Amelia	1984
	Selena	1971
	Williams, Garth	1912
17	Champagne, Larry III	1985
18	Hart, Melissa Joan	1976
20	Brundtland, Gro Harlem	1939
21	Muir, John	1838
22	Levi-Montalcini, Rita	1909
	Oppenheimer, J. Robert	1904
23	Watson, Barry	1974
24	Clarkson, Kelly	1982
25	Fitzgerald, Ella	1917
26	Giff, Patricia Reilly	1935
	Nelson, Marilyn	1946
	Pei, I.M.	1917
27	Wilson, August	1945
28	Alba, Jessica	1981
	Baker, James	1930
	Duncan, Lois	1934
	Hussein, Saddam	1937
	Kaunda, Kenneth	1924
	Lee, Harper	1926
	Leno, Jay	1950
29	Agassi, Andre	1970
	Earnhardt, Dale	1951
	Seinfeld, Jerry	1954
30	Dunst, Kirsten	1982

May		Year
2	Hughes, Sarah	1985
	Spock, Benjamin	1903
4	Bass, Lance	1979
5	Lionni, Leo	1910
	Maxwell, Jody-Anne	1986
	Opdyke, Irene Gut	1922
	Strasser, Todd	1950
	WilderBrathwaite, Gloria	1964
7	Land, Edwin	1909
8	Attenborough, David	1926
	Iglesias, Enrique	1975
	Meltzer, Milton	1915
9	Bergen, Candice	1946
	Yzerman, Steve	1965

May (continued)		Year
10	Cooney, Caroline B.	1947
	Curtis, Christopher Paul	1953
	Galdikas, Biruté	1946
	Jamison, Judith	1944
	Ochoa, Ellen	1958
11	Farrakhan, Louis	1933
12	Mowat, Farley	1921
13	Pascal, Francine	1938
	Rodman, Dennis	1961
14	Lucas, George	1944
	Smith, Emmitt	1969
15	Albright, Madeleine	1937
	Almond, David	1951
	Johns, Jasper	1930
	Zindel, Paul	1936
16	Coville, Bruce	1950
17	Paulsen, Gary	1939
18	John Paul II	1920
19	Brody, Jane	1941
	Garnett, Kevin	1976
	Hansberry, Lorraine	1930
21	Robinson, Mary	1944
22	Ohno, Apolo	1982
23	Bardeen, John	1908
	Jewel	1974
	O'Dell, Scott	1898
24	Dumars, Joe	1963
	Gilman, Billy	1988
26	Hill, Lauryn	1975
	Ride, Sally	1951
27	Carson, Rachel	1907
	Kerr, M.E.	1927
28	Giuliani, Rudolph	1944
	Johnston, Lynn	1947
	Shabazz, Betty	1936
29	Clements, Andrew	1949
30	Cohen, Adam Ezra	1979
?	McGruder, Aaron	1974

June		Year
1	Lalas, Alexi	1970
	Morissette, Alanis	1974
4	Kistler, Darci	1964
	Nelson, Gaylord	1916
5	Scarry, Richard	1919
6	Rylant, Cynthia	1954
7	Brooks, Gwendolyn	1917
	Iverson, Allen	1975
	Oleynik, Larisa	1981
8	Berners-Lee, Tim	1955
	Bush, Barbara	1925
	Davenport, Lindsay	1976
	Edelman, Marian Wright	1939
	Wayans, Keenen Ivory	1958
	Wright, Frank Lloyd	1869
9	Portman, Natalie	1981
10	Frank, Anne	1929
	Lipinski, Tara	1982
	Sendak, Maurice	1928
	Shea, Jim, Jr.	1968
11	Cousteau, Jacques	1910
	Montana, Joe	1956
12	Bush, George	1924
13	Allen, Tim	1953
	Alvarez, Luis W.	1911
	Christo	1935
	Nash, John Forbes, Jr.	1928
14	Bourke-White, Margaret	1904
	Graf, Steffi	1969
	Summitt, Pat	1952
	Yep, Laurence	1948
15	Horner, Jack	1946
	Jacques, Brian	1939
16	McClintock, Barbara	1902
	Shakur, Tupac	1971
17	Gingrich, Newt	1943
	Jansen, Dan	1965
	Williams, Venus	1980
18	Johnson, Angela	1961
	Morris, Nathan	1971
	Van Allsburg, Chris	1949
19	Abdul, Paula	1962
	Aung San Suu Kyi	1945
	Muldowney, Shirley	1940
20	Goodman, John	1952
21	Bhutto, Benazir	1953
	Breathed, Berke	1957
22	Bradley, Ed	1941
	Daly, Carson	1973
	Warner, Kurt	1971
23	Rudolph, Wilma	1940
	Thomas, Clarence	1948
25	Carle, Eric	1929
	Gibbs, Lois	1951
26	Ammann, Simon	1981
	Harris, Bernard	1956
	Jeter, Derek	1974
	LeMond, Greg	1961

27	Babbitt, Bruce	1938
	Dunbar, Paul Laurence	1872
	Perot, H. Ross	1930
28	Elway, John	1960
29	Jiménez, Francisco	1943
30	Ballard, Robert	1942

July		**Year**
1	Brower, David	1912
	Calderone, Mary S.	1904
	Diana, Princess of Wales	1961
	Duke, David	1950
	Lewis, Carl	1961
	McCully, Emily Arnold	1939
2	Bethe, Hans A.	1906
	Gantos, Jack	1951
	George, Jean Craighead	1919
	Lynch, Chris	1962
	Marshall, Thurgood	1908
	Petty, Richard	1937
	Thomas, Dave	1932
3	Simmons, Ruth	1945
5	Watterson, Bill	1958
6	Bush, George W.	1946
	Dalai Lama	1935
	Dumitriu, Ioana	1976
7	Chagall, Marc	1887
	Heinlein, Robert	1907
	Kwan, Michelle	1980
	Otto, Sylke	1969
	Sakic, Joe	1969
	Stachowski, Richie	1985
8	Hardaway, Anfernee "Penny"	1971
	Sealfon, Rebecca	1983
9	Farmer, Nancy	1941
	Hanks, Tom	1956
	Hassan II	1929
	Krim, Mathilde	1926
	Sacks, Oliver	1933
10	Ashe, Arthur	1943
	Benson, Mildred	1905
	Boulmerka, Hassiba	1969
11	Cisneros, Henry	1947
	White, E.B.	1899
12	Bauer, Joan	1951
	Cosby, Bill	1937
	Johnson, Johanna	1983
	Yamaguchi, Kristi	1972
13	Ford, Harrison	1942
	Stewart, Patrick	1940
15	Aristide, Jean-Bertrand	1953
	Ventura, Jesse	1951
16	Johnson, Jimmy	1943
	Sanders, Barry	1968
17	An Na	1972
	Stepanek, Mattie	1990
18	Diesel, Vin	1967
	Glenn, John	1921
	Lemelson, Jerome	1923
	Mandela, Nelson	1918
19	Tarvin, Herbert	1985
20	Hillary, Sir Edmund	1919
21	Chastain, Brandi	1968
	Reno, Janet	1938
	Riley, Dawn	1964
	Stern, Isaac	1920
	Williams, Robin	1952
22	Calder, Alexander	1898
	Dole, Bob	1923
	Hinton, S.E.	1948
23	Haile Selassie	1892
	Williams, Michelle	1980
24	Abzug, Bella	1920
	Bonds, Barry	1964
	Krone, Julie	1963
	Lopez, Jennifer	1970
	Moss, Cynthia	1940
	Wilson, Mara	1987
25	Payton, Walter	1954
26	Berenstain, Jan	1923
	Clark, Kelly	1983
27	Dunlap, Alison	1969
	Rodriguez, Alex	1975
28	Davis, Jim	1945
	Pottter, Beatrix	1866
29	Burns, Ken	1953
	Creech, Sharon	1945
	Dole, Elizabeth Hanford	1936
	Jennings, Peter	1938
	Morris, Wanya	1973
30	Hill, Anita	1956
	Moore, Henry	1898
	Schroeder, Pat	1940
31	Cronin, John	1950
	Radcliffe, Daniel	1989
	Reid Banks, Lynne	1929
	Rowling, J. K.	1965
	Weinke, Chris	1972

August		Year
1	Brown, Ron	1941
	Coolio	1963
	Garcia, Jerry	1942
2	Baldwin, James	1924
	Healy, Bernadine	1944
3	Brady, Tom	1977
	Roper, Dee Dee	?
	Savimbi, Jonas	1934
4	Gordon, Jeff	1971
5	Córdova, France	1947
	Ewing, Patrick	1962
	Jackson, Shirley Ann	1946
6	Cooney, Barbara	1917
	Robinson, David	1965
	Warhol, Andy	?1928
7	Byars, Betsy	1928
	Duchovny, David	1960
	Leakey, Louis	1903
	Villa-Komaroff, Lydia	1947
8	Boyd, Candy Dawson	1946
	Chasez, JC	1976
9	Anderson, Gillian	1968
	Holdsclaw, Chamique	1977
	Houston, Whitney	1963
	McKissack, Patricia C.	1944
	Sanders, Deion	1967
	Travers, P.L.	?1899
11	Haley, Alex	1921
	Hogan, Hulk	1953
	Rowan, Carl T.	1925
	Wozniak, Steve	1950
12	Barton, Hazel	1971
	Martin, Ann M.	1955
	McKissack, Fredrick L.	1939
	Myers, Walter Dean	1937
	Sampras, Pete	1971
13	Battle, Kathleen	1948
	Castro, Fidel	1927
14	Berry, Halle	?1967
	Johnson, Magic	1959
	Larson, Gary	1950
15	Affleck, Benjamin	1972
	Ellerbee, Linda	1944
16	Farrell, Suzanne	1945
	Fu Mingxia	1978
	Robison, Emily	1972
	Thampy, George	1987
18	Danziger, Paula	1944
	Murie, Margaret	1902
19	Clinton, Bill	1946
	Soren, Tabitha	1967
20	Chung, Connie	1946
	Dakides, Tara	1975
	Milosevic, Slobodan	1941
21	Chamberlain, Wilt	1936
	Draper, Sharon	1952
	Toro, Natalia	1984
22	Bradbury, Ray	1920
	Dorough, Howie	1973
	Schwarzkopf, H. Norman	1934
23	Bryant, Kobe	1978
	Novello, Antonia	1944
	Phoenix, River	1970
24	Arafat, Yasir	1929
	Dai Qing	1941
	Ripken, Cal, Jr.	1960
25	Case, Steve	1958
	Wolff, Virginia Euwer	1937
26	Burke, Christopher	1965
	Culkin, Macaulay	1980
	Sabin, Albert	1906
	Teresa, Mother	1910
	Tuttle, Merlin	1941
27	Moseley, Jonny	1975
	Nechita, Alexandra	1985
	Rinaldi, Ann	1934
28	Dove, Rita	1952
	Evans, Janet	1971
	Peterson, Roger Tory	1908
	Priestley, Jason	1969
	Rimes, LeAnn	1982
	Twain, Shania	1965
29	Grandin, Temple	1947
	Hesse, Karen	1952
	McCain, John	1936
30	Earle, Sylvia	1935
	Roddick, Andy	1982
31	Perlman, Itzhak	1945

September		Year
1	Estefan, Gloria	1958
	Guy, Rosa	1925
	Smyers, Karen	1961
2	Bearden, Romare	?1912
	Galeczka, Chris	1981
	Lisanti, Mariangela	1983
	Mohajer, Dineh	1972
3	Delany, Bessie	1891

	September (continued)	**Year**
4	Knowles, Beyoncé	1981
	Wright, Richard	1908
5	Guisewite, Cathy	1950
6	Fiorina, Carly	1954
7	Lawrence, Jacob	1917
	Moses, Grandma	1860
	Pippig, Uta	1965
	Scurry, Briana	1971
8	Prelutsky, Jack	1940
	Scieszka, Jon	1954
	Thomas, Jonathan Taylor	1982
10	Gould, Stephen Jay	1941
13	Johnson, Michael	1967
	Monroe, Bill	1911
	Taylor, Mildred D.	1943
14	Armstrong, William H.	1914
	Stanford, John	1938
15	dePaola, Tomie	1934
	Marino, Dan	1961
16	Bledel, Alexis	1981
	Dahl, Roald	1916
	Gates, Henry Louis, Jr.	1950
17	Burger, Warren	1907
18	Armstrong, Lance	1971
	Carson, Ben	1951
	de Mille, Agnes	1905
	Fields, Debbi	1956
	Nakamura, Leanne	1982
19	Delany, Sadie	1889
21	Fielder, Cecil	1963
	Hill, Faith	1967
	Jones, Chuck	1912
	King, Stephen	1947
	Nkrumah, Kwame	1909
22	Richardson, Dot	1961
23	Nevelson, Louise	1899
24	George, Eddie	1973
	Ochoa, Severo	1905
25	Gwaltney, John Langston	1928
	Locklear, Heather	1961
	Lopez, Charlotte	1976
	Pinkney, Andrea Davis	1963
	Pippen, Scottie	1965
	Reeve, Christopher	1952
	Smith, Will	1968
	Walters, Barbara	1931
26	Mandela, Winnie	1934
	Stockman, Shawn	1972
	Williams, Serena	1981
27	Handford, Martin	1956
28	Cray, Seymour	1925
	Duff, Hilary	1987
	Pak, Se Ri	1977
29	Berenstain, Stan	1923
	Guey, Wendy	1983
	Gumbel, Bryant	1948
30	Hingis, Martina	1980
	Moceanu, Dominique	1981

	October	**Year**
1	Carter, Jimmy	1924
	McGwire, Mark	1963
2	Leibovitz, Annie	1949
3	Campbell, Neve	1973
	Herriot, James	1916
	Richardson, Kevin	1972
	Winfield, Dave	1951
4	Cushman, Karen	1941
	Kamler, Kenneth	1947
	Rice, Anne	1941
5	Fitzhugh, Louise	1928
	Hill, Grant	1972
	Lemieux, Mario	1965
	Lin, Maya	1959
	Roy, Patrick	1965
	Winslet, Kate	1975
6	Bennett, Cherie	1960
	Lobo, Rebecca	1973
7	Ma, Yo-Yo	1955
8	Jackson, Jesse	1941
	Ringgold, Faith	1930
	Stine, R.L.	1943
	Winans, CeCe	1964
9	Bryan, Zachery Ty	1981
	Senghor, Léopold Sédar	1906
	Sorenstam, Annika	1970
10	Favre, Brett	1969
	Saro-Wiwa, Ken	1941
11	Murray, Ty	1969
	Perry, Luke	?1964
	Young, Steve	1961
12	Childress, Alice	?1920
	Jones, Marion	1975
	Maguire, Martie	1969
	Ward, Charlie	1970
13	Carter, Chris	1956
	Kerrigan, Nancy	1969
	Rice, Jerry	1962
14	Daniel, Beth	1956
	Maines, Natalie	1974
	Mobutu Sese Seko	1930
	Usher	1978

October (continued)		Year
15	Iacocca, Lee A.	1924
16	Stewart, Kordell	1972
17	Jemison, Mae	1956
	Kirkpatrick, Chris	1971
18	Foreman, Dave	1946
	Marsalis, Wynton	1961
	Navratilova, Martina	1956
	Suzuki, Shinichi	1898
19	Pullman, Philip	1946
20	Kenyatta, Jomo	?1891
	Mantle, Mickey	1931
	Pinsky, Robert	1940
21	Gillespie, Dizzy	1956
	Le Guin, Ursula K.	1929
22	Hanson, Zac	1985
23	Anderson, Laurie Halse	1961
	Crichton, Michael	1942
	Pelé	1940
25	Martinez, Pedro	1971
26	Clinton, Hillary Rodham	1947
27	Anderson, Terry	1947
	Morrison, Lillian	1917
28	Gates, Bill	1955
	Roberts, Julia	1967
	Salk, Jonas	1914
29	Flowers, Vonetta	1973
	Ryder, Winona	1971
31	Candy, John	1950
	Paterson, Katherine	1932
	Patterson, Ryan	1983
	Pauley, Jane	1950
	Tucker, Chris	1973

November		Year
2	lang, k.d.	1961
3	Arnold, Roseanne	1952
	Ho, David	1952
	Kiraly, Karch	1960
4	Combs, Sean (Puff Daddy)	1969
	Handler, Ruth	1916
7	Bahrke, Shannon	1980
	Canady, Alexa	1950
8	Mittermeier, Russell A.	1949
9	Denton, Sandi	
	Sagan, Carl	1934
10	Bates, Daisy	?1914
11	Blige, Mary J.	1971
	DiCaprio, Leonardo	1974
	Vonnegut, Kurt	1922
12	Andrews, Ned	1980
	Blackmun, Harry	1908
	Harding, Tonya	1970
	Sosa, Sammy	1968
13	Goldberg, Whoopi	1949
14	Boutros-Ghali, Boutros	1922
	Hussein, King	1935
	Lindgren, Astrid	1907
	Rice, Condoleezza	1954
15	O'Keeffe, Georgia	1887
	Pinkwater, Daniel	1941
16	Baiul, Oksana	1977
	Miyamoto, Shigeru	1952
17	Fuentes, Daisy	1966
	Hanson, Ike	1980
18	Driscoll, Jean	1966
	Klug, Chris	1972
	Mankiller, Wilma	1945
	Vidal, Christina	1981
19	Collins, Eileen	1956
	Devers, Gail	1966
	Glover, Savion	1973
	Strug, Kerri	1977
21	Aikman, Troy	1966
	Griffey, Ken, Jr.	1969
	Schwikert, Tasha	1984
	Speare, Elizabeth George	1908
24	Ndeti, Cosmas	1971
25	Grant, Amy	1960
	Thomas, Lewis	1913
26	Patrick, Ruth	1907
	Pine, Elizabeth Michele	1975
	Schulz, Charles	1922
27	Nye, Bill	1955
	White, Jaleel	1977
29	L'Engle, Madeleine	1918
	Lewis, C. S.	1898
	Tubman, William V. S.	1895
30	Jackson, Bo	1962
	Parks, Gordon	1912

December		Year
2	Hendrickson, Sue	1949
	Macaulay, David	1946
	Seles, Monica	1973
	Spears, Britney	1981
	Watson, Paul	1950
3	Kim Dae-jung	?1925
	Filipovic, Zlata	1980
5	Muniz, Frankie	1985
6	Risca, Viviana	1982

December (continued)		Year
7	Bird, Larry	1956
	Carter, Aaron	1987
8	Rivera, Diego	1886
9	Hopper, Grace Murray	1906
12	Bialik, Mayim	1975
	Frankenthaler, Helen	1928
	Sinatra, Frank	1915
13	Fedorov, Sergei	1969
	Pierce, Tamora	1954
14	Jackson, Shirley	1916
15	Aidid, Mohammed Farah	1934
	Mendes, Chico	1944
	Taymor, Julie	1952
16	Bailey, Donovan	1967
	McCary, Michael	1971
	Mead, Margaret	1901
17	Kielburger, Craig	1982
18	Aguilera, Christina	1980
	Holmes, Katie	1978
	Pitt, Brad	1964
	Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa	1971
	Spielberg, Steven	1947
19	Morrison, Sam	1936
	Sapp, Warren	1972
	White, Reggie	1961
20	Uchida, Mitsuko	1948
	Zirkle, Aliy	1969
21	Evert, Chris	1954
	Griffith Joyner, Florence	1959
	Stiles, Jackie	1978
	Webb, Karrie	1974
22	Pinkney, Jerry	1939
23	Avi	1937
	Harbaugh, Jim	1963
	Lowman, Meg	1953
24	Fauci, Anthony S.	1940
	Flake, Sharon	1955
	Lowe, Alex	1958
	Martin, Ricky	1971
25	Ryan, Pam Muñoz	1951
	Sadat, Anwar	1918
26	Butcher, Susan	1954
27	Roberts, Cokie	1943
28	Lee, Stan	1922
	Washington, Denzel	1954
30	Willingham, Tyrone	1953
	Woods, Tiger	1975

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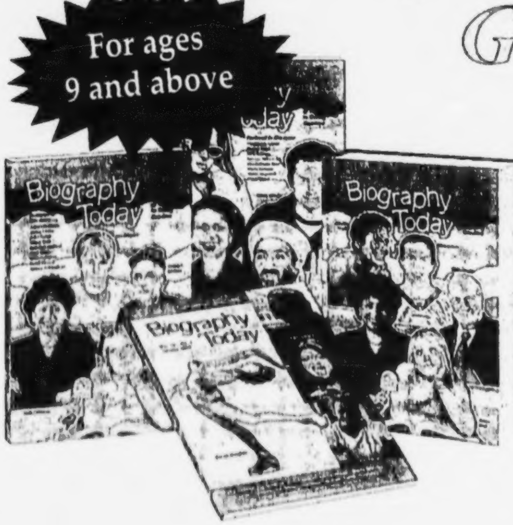

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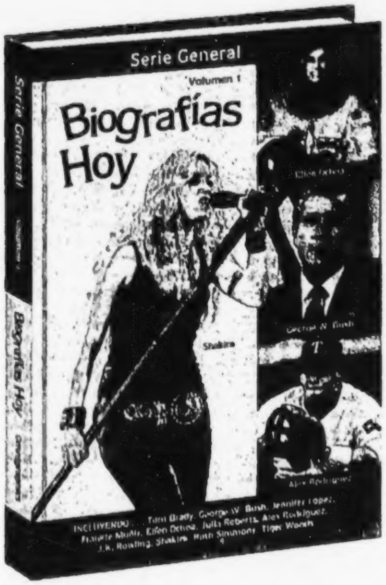

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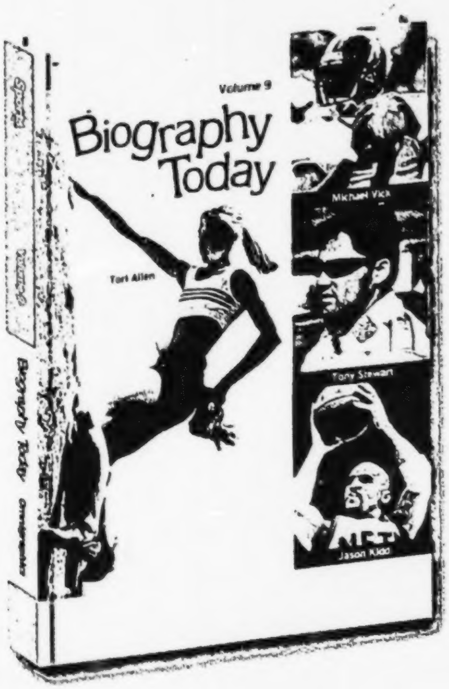

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